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# Educative encounters: An analysis of Dewey, Buber and Noddings to understand the role of encountering self, others and the world in teaching and learning in higher education

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EDUCATIVE ENCOUNTERS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF DEWEY, BUBER AND NODDINGS TO UNDERSTAND THE  
ROLE OF ENCOUNTERING SELF, OTHERS AND THE WORLD IN TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

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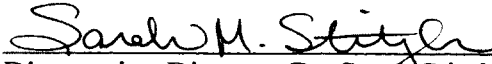
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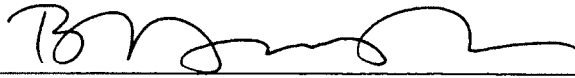
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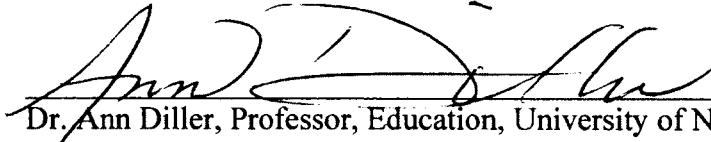
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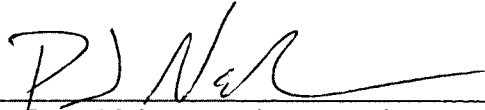
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## DEDICATION

For Jon, my love.

Here's to some Plan A's working out!

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## ABSTRACT

### EDUCATIVE ENCOUNTERS: AN ANALYSIS OF DEWEY, BUBER AND NODDINGS TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF ENCOUNTERING SELF, OTHERS AND THE WORLD IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By  
Carrie Maureen Nolan  
University of New Hampshire, May 2012

This dissertation provides a novel conception of educative encounter as a means of providing a pedagogical framework for directing experience in the classroom for the purpose of cultivating growth, and specifically cultivating care (N. Noddings, 2003a). By honing in on encounter as the relational aspect of experience, emphasizing the importance of the relational quality of the learning experience, and articulating a different approach to teaching in higher education, this conception helps educators attend to strengthening learning outcomes oriented towards the growth of students. This serves towards the illumination of learning through and for educative encounter by addressing both the meaning of educative encounter and what constitutes ideal ones. To accomplish this, analysis is done of three philosophers. The analysis begins with John Dewey. Dewey's strongest contribution to my articulation of educative encounter is his idea on subject-object knowing (McDermott, 1981). Next, the work of Martin Buber is taken into consideration. Buber, with his concept of I-Thou encounter offers a foundation for Dewey's subject-object knowing (Buber, 1958b). Finally, the work of

Nel Noddings is brought under analysis. Noddings, in her care theory, delineates a caring relationship in which both members of the relationship are aware of the care-giving and receiving. I then synthesize the work of these philosophers to build the conception of encounter, considering how a person experiences the three core arenas, in which encounter is manifested (self, others and the world). Attention is finally turned to the Classroom CARE model, which I have developed to foster the implementation of educative encounter in higher education by focusing on four pedagogically interrelated strands: community, action, reflection and environment.

I argue that the novel conception of encounter offered in this dissertation has much to contribute to education. It is meaningful because it includes moral education by focusing on how we meet each other in a manner to promote growth, goes beyond subject mastery, has applicability in all disciplines, adds to the philosophical conversation on the importance of encounter for education and takes Dewey, Noddings and Buber into higher education, an area in which each philosopher has had less uptake.

Noddings is brought under analysis. Noddings, in her care theory, delineates a caring relationship in which both members of the relationship are aware of the care-giving and receiving. I then synthesize the work of these philosophers to build the conception of encounter, considering how a person experiences the three core arenas, in which encounter is manifested (self, others and the world). Attention is finally turned to the Classroom CARE model, which I have developed to foster the implementation of educative encounter in higher education by focusing on four pedagogically interrelated strands: community, action, reflection and environment.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation aims at building a novel conception of educative encounter to lead to new classroom pedagogies useful in encouraging “the growth of competent, caring, loving and lovable people” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. xxvi). By honing in on encounter as the relational aspect of experience, emphasizing the importance of the quality of the learning experience, and articulating a different approach to teaching, especially in higher education, this conception attends to strengthening learning outcomes oriented towards the growth of students.

Pedagogy becomes then the twin effort to integrate the directions of experience with the total needs of the person and to cultivate the ability of an individual to generate new potentialities in his experience and to make new relationships so as to foster patterns of growth” (McDermott, 1981, p. xxv).

This novel conception of educative encounter is meant to be useful in accomplishing the twin efforts of directing experience to the needs of the person for growth and specifically cultivating the ability of the individual to care.

In order to address the theoretical foundation of the notion of educative encounter, and notions related to the idea of educative encounter, I analyze the concept through three separate theories of education: John Dewey’s pragmatism. Nel Noddings’ care theory, and Martin Buber’s dialogicism. In employing these three theories, I argue for a conception of educative encounter informed by but more developed than that appearing in the writings of any single author. The combination of these philosophers’ approaches is useful because each adds to the other something vital in regards to educative encounter.

Dewey offers a needed approach to education that stands in between traditional and progressive educators. Though he wrote about education almost one hundred years ago, there are aspects of his observations regarding traditional and progressive education that remain relevant today. I rely extensively on Dewey's notion of educative experience; namely, experience that promotes growth.

Noddings focuses on how we can live morally well, guided by an ethics of care, and on how care can be taught and learned in school. She gives centrality to moral acts within educational aims. Noddings' caring encounter is an excellent model for conceptualizing a particular type of encounter. For Noddings, when she addresses encounter, she speaks of caring encounters, encounters where care is given and received. While I am addressing encounter where learning beyond learning to care occurs through the encounter, hence, educative encounter, care is an integral part of this conception.

Buber attends to knowing others, rather than only knowing objects, which is a way of knowing needed, but often ignored, in education. Drawing on his distinction between I-Thou encounter and I-It encounter helps build this conception of educative encounter in regards to subjective ways of knowing. Three arenas where these types of encounter take place will be explored to further define educative encounter, these arenas being self, others and the world.

I have articulated the means of facilitating educative encounter in higher education by development of the Classroom CARE model (Community, Action, Reflection, and Environment). Educators have the opportunity, indeed the responsibility, to shape the nature and quality of educative encounters in their classrooms. For the purposes of this dissertation, educative encounter is best understood or applied in the

context of higher education, meaning education occurring in institutions beyond secondary education offering professional and academic degrees. This dissertation is restricted to higher education to presuppose a certain level of engagement that cannot easily be presumed at lower levels of education. Examples, however, are occasionally drawn from K-12 settings to make particular points.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the meaning of educative encounter?
2. What constitutes ideal educative encounters and how may they be implemented?

### **Research Methodology**

This study involves conceptual research and, very broadly speaking, the methodology employed is that of analytic philosophy. A conceptual approach to the notion of encounter in education grounded in analytical philosophy can expose the nature of this term most fully, by thoroughly describing educative encounter. The findings from my analysis of Dewey, Buber and Noddings will be checked with the more social and emotional aspects of educative encounter via experientially describing educative encounter as a lived and felt thing. While there may be implications for further inquiry in the form of empirical research, emerging from this project, such studies will require a strong and clearly articulated conceptual foundation, a foundation which this study can provide.

The lens of analysis suggests that I should proceed with my dissertation in certain ways, described as follows. At its very core, analytic philosophy values analysis, including “[c]onceptual analysis, careful assessment of arguments, the rooting out of ambiguity, the drawing of clarifying distinctions” (Phillips, 2008, n.p.). Clearly, this is a

broad umbrella and encompasses many types of analysis. Its methodology suggests “discovery, working back from what is ordinarily known to the underlying reasons (demonstrating ‘the fact’), and synthesis as a method of proof, working forwards again from what is discovered to the needed explanation (demonstrating ‘the reason why’)” (Beaney, 2009, n.p.). What is sought, in this case, is an understanding of educative encounter as the relational aspect of experience, and then an understanding of how it may arise/be treated in education. In order to find what is sought, a working back or regressive analysis will be done to demonstrate how the concept has been used, in the writings of Dewey, Buber and Noddings (Beaney, 2009). Encountering the other is the common thread in this analysis of the works of these three philosophers. Discovery occurs in uncovering what each has to say through their explicit or implied theories about educative encounter. Resolution occurs in looking at both contributory and problematic aspects of what each individually has to say, and in addressing the commensurability of the three.

The second aspect of my research is synthesis, which is both compositional and instructional (Beaney, 2009). The aim of my analysis is combining the complementary aspects of Dewey, Noddings and Buber into a novel conception of encounter. This will be accomplished by critically evaluating their accounts of both learning and encounter, then arguing that each provides elements, but only partial elements, of an ideal educative encounter. I will show how bringing together the diverse elements can generate a better, more complete and innovative understanding of the notion of educative encounters for educators. Following this, I will concentrate on the goal of instruction by examining both



where educative encounters occur and how educators may foster what I see as ideal educative encounters in higher education.

Once a conception of encounter is offered, an experientially grounded description based on this conception will be developed. By examining educative encounter experientially, educators can learn better ways of making use of the notion of educative encounters, bringing to the fore in the educational process the role of relations in learning. To experientially convey the characteristics of educative encounter I will vary the situations in which the term is used. The three arenas within which situations of educative encounter, and the subject encountering, will be considered and varied are self, others and the world. In the first, encountering self, I will make clear how self is defined in such a manner that encountering self as an 'other' is possible. "Awareness of one's own experience (self-consciousness, in one sense), self-awareness (awareness-of-oneself), and the self in different roles (as thinking, acting, etc.)" (Smith, 2008, para. 9) will be considered. In regards to encountering others, I will look at how one subject encounters another through "awareness of other persons (in empathy, intersubjectivity, collectivity), linguistic activity (involving meaning, communication, understanding others) [and] social interaction (including collective action)" (Smith, 2008, para. 9). Considering the characteristics of a person encountering the world, I will take into account the "everyday activity in our surrounding life-world (in a particular culture)" (Smith, 2008, para. 9), as these everyday activities relate to education. As Heidegger says,

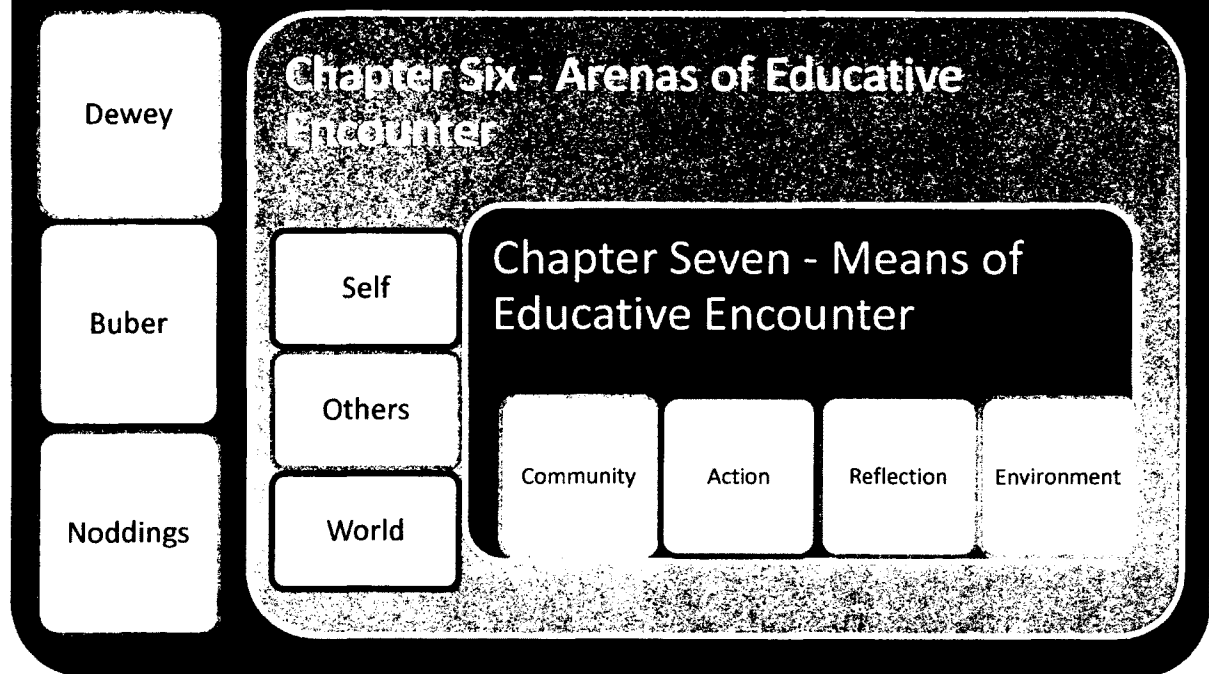
we and our activities are always 'in the world', our being is being-in-the-world, so we do not study our activities by bracketing the world, rather we interpret our activities and the meaning things have for us by looking to our contextual relations to things in the world. (in Smith, 2008, para. 42)

Grounding the conception of educative encounter experientially begins with first person description of lived experience, and proceeds to consider ourselves and our world in action and relation. Experientially grounding the synthesis and subsequent resulting conception of encounter will enable me to describe what its characteristics are as they relate to higher education.

### **Chapter Orientation**

To begin, chapters two, three and four explore educative encounter based on analysis of relevant works of three core philosophers: Dewey; Buber; and Noddings. The fifth chapter synthesizes their works, offering an initial concept of educative encounter based on the analysis and synthesis. The sixth chapter fully addresses the notion of educative encounter through grounding the concept experientially, exploring the three arenas of educative encounter: self, others and world. The seventh chapter articulates means for educators in achieving the constructed notion of educative encounter through the Classroom CARE model. The conclusion aims at drawing together an awareness of the nature of educative encounter, where and how it occurs, and how educators might facilitate it in higher education.

## Chapter Two to Five - Philosophers of Encounter (Analysis & Synthesis)



### **Chapter Two: Philosophers of Encounter - Dewey**

Analyzing the philosophers of educative encounter, Dewey, Noddings and Buber, is the cornerstone of the argument that I am building for a particular understanding of educative encounters. This chapter thoroughly explicates Dewey's conception of experience and what constitutes educative experience. With a strong commitment to a clear understanding of experience, Dewey specifically puts forth ideas on interaction and continuity that are essential to growth and helpful in understanding the notion of educative encounter. For Dewey, education is the process of growth, meaning "the cumulative movement of action toward a later result" (1981, p. 484). He insists that as educators, we examine a current experience in light of what further experiences it is

leading towards. In addition to the particulars that Dewey offers, it is because Dewey is seated well within the parameters of pragmatism that his perspective is vital to the account I am building. In part, it is best to understand educative encounter in terms of pragmatism, because pragmatism offers a conception of subject-object knowing grounded in experience that complements Buber's subject-subject knowing. Additionally, thoughtful action is core within pragmatism (Shade, 2001), leading to a rich account of experience. What is both needed and what is modeled in pragmatism regarding experience is an inclusive community of inquiry, resting on human solidarity, addressing practical and moral matters in a future oriented manner while acknowledging and taking into account the past. In short, Dewey's pragmatic theory of experience can successfully support educative encounter as advocated in this dissertation. Dewey deals broadly with experience while I wish to deal specifically with the aspect of experience that happens in the place between, in the space that exists between one and another, in relationship. In this place, what happens may be educative encounter, and that is where my focus lies.

### **Chapter Three: Philosophers of Encounter - Buber**

I continue the analysis by taking up the work of Martin Buber, a philosopher and a Jewish mystic who examines the idea of dialogic relation. Buber is most often cited for his work on 'I-Thou' encounter (Blenkinsop, 2005b), but just as often nothing more is said of these ideas and little attention paid to other, religious, works of his which all seem to have a useful meaning on the notion of educative encounter. For Buber, meeting the world in an I-Thou manner is absolutely necessary to sustaining I-It encounters. From the I-Thou the I-It should arise. The connection between Dewey and Buber is made in exploring what Buber means by this.

#### **Chapter Four: Philosophers of Encounter - Noddings**

To round off the analysis of the philosophers of encounter, I take up Noddings' work. There are two reasons for including Noddings in the discussion at hand. First, her work on care theory is an excellent example of conceptualizing a common term, in her case, caring encounters; a concept that directly relates to educative encounters. By offering a careful conception of educative encounter, as an aspect of experience, I hope to follow Noddings' example in her work with care, rely on her conception as a part of the conception I am building and to build mine within her moral framework. Noddings helps us attend to that which Dewey does not, namely political and social concerns regarding how we understand caring encounters. While a main thrust of Noddings' work is that students must learn to care in schools, educative encounters differ from caring encounters. Education may take place regardless of whether caring relations are in place. Learning beyond learning to care is not inherent in caring encounters. Where the two come together, as I believe they should, bears further consideration.

#### **Chapter Five: Philosophers of Encounter - Synthesis**

The accounts of Dewey, Noddings and Buber will be critically evaluated in this chapter to argue that each provides elements of an appropriately conceived educative encounter. Here, I demonstrate how bringing together the diverse elements of their perspectives can generate an innovative understanding of the notion of educative encounter for educators. To accomplish this, I first compare pairings of the philosophers according to their similarities and incommensurabilities, through which I demonstrate that the combination of the complementary aspects of these three is stronger than its problematic parts. I address unique contributions each scholar makes to the developing

notion of educative encounter, followed by laying out my conception of educative encounter based on the prior analysis of the works of Dewey, Noddings and Buber.

### **Chapter Six: Arenas of Educative Encounter**

Education, including higher education, provides the opportunity to learn through educative encounters and to learn to have educative encounters. In furthering this conception of educative encounter, I turn to the three arenas or locations of encounter: self, others, and the world (by world I encompass animals, plants, ideas, and places, all of which may be incorporated into the higher education classroom for learning purposes). These arenas have been chosen because they are all significant “spheres in which the world of relation arises” (Buber in Biemann, 2002, p. 183), relation that consists of one meeting an ‘other’. The otherness we encounter is often a part of ourselves, and so this is the first arena of encounter that will be considered. This begins with the question of how one encounters one’s self. How do we learn from this type of educative encounter? The second arena of educative encounter is life with others. “It is here that relation is manifest and enters language” (Buber in Biemann, 2002, p. 183). Regarding this arena, questions will be addressed relating to issues of understanding the perspectives of an ‘other’. The final arena in which educative encounter takes place is with the world, by which I mean ideas, places and nature. The questions of how we learn to meet the world and learn from meeting the world will be addressed. I finish by providing some comments on anticipated criticisms of this combination of the three scholars and how I might respond to these criticisms.

## **Chapter Seven: Educative Encounters in Higher Education**

Educators are in a place of tremendous influence in the classroom and can use this influence to construct either educative, mis-educative, or non-educative encounters. This chapter considers the practical implications of this influence, and the responsibility that comes with it, for the higher education classroom. To help educators in understanding how their classroom is, or could be, a classroom that facilitates educative encounters, I have developed the Classroom CARE (Community, Action, Reflection, and Environment) model. A few typical moments in higher education will be analyzed to show how they currently are mis- or non-educative to aid with understanding that there is a problem with current approaches to education and envisioning improvement through strengthened educative encounters in the classroom. Examples of what I consider to be quality educative encounters in higher education classrooms will be articulated and defended.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

In this final section I make clear what new and important ideas this dissertation has offered to the literature in this area, and how teaching practice might benefit from the approach I am proposing. In part, I accomplish this by applying criteria developed by Jane Roland Martin (2011) to judge an educational theory and answering these questions: 1. Does it accord with and organize our considered judgments about its subject matter? 2. Does it suggest new lines of inquiry? 3. Does it illuminate its subject? The purpose of this dissertation is to offer a conception of educative encounters; as such, this section will review the three philosophers, Dewey, Noddings and Buber and their contributions, the three core arenas, self, others and the world through which encounter is manifested and finally the implementation of the conception by means of the Classroom CARE model.

## CHAPTER II

### PHILOSOPHERS OF ENCOUNTER – DEWEY

The two questions I set out to answer in this dissertation regard the meaning of educative encounter and what constitutes ideal ones. By analyzing the works of Dewey, Buber and Noddings as philosophers of encounter, the work of addressing these questions begins.

#### Dewey

John Dewey was born in 1859, the same year as Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* book was published; both events would change the faces of education and knowledge. Dewey himself was influenced deeply by Darwin's work and considered himself a naturalist in the sense of recognizing the biological origin and development of humans as paramount in understanding society and education (Reed & Johnson, 2007). Dewey's other theoretical home is found in American pragmatism. As an American pragmatist that hearkened to Darwin's theory of naturalism, Dewey researched and wrote on education in the late 1800s up until he published his last work, *Knowing and the Known* in 1949, published with Arthur Bentley (Reed & Johnson, 2007). He lived 92 years, dying in 1952. Some of what Dewey accomplished in his writings was to give place to the "lived body at the center of all his philosophy" (McDermott, 1981, p. xxvii), in that "the meaning of life was to be found in 'growth' – that is, in an embodied process – rather than in a state of being... [and that] human activity was to be considered as central rather than peripheral in any evaluation of its worth" (McDermott, 1981, p.



xxviii). Though prolific, as Dewey published hundreds of articles and numerous books, his writing can be seen as an obstacle to understanding his ideas. Nonetheless, Dewey is cited as one of the most influential educators, for better or worse depending on your outlook, in the last century and a half in American education (Reed & Johnson, 2007).

John Novak, professor of education at Brock University, states (as quoted in Reed & Johnson, 2007), “John Dewey is like the Bible – often alluded to (both by his supporters and detractors) but seldom read...” (p. 100). This statement points to the room that exists to this day for reading and developing Dewey’s ideas. In this dissertation Dewey’s ideas on educative experience are of utmost interest. While Dewey never directly addresses the notion of encounter as a concept, he does spend significant effort in his writing on the conception of experience. In his seminal work, *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey bases his educational philosophy on a particular view of experience. Understanding this particular view is an essential first step for understanding educative encounter. As stated in Chapter One, educative encounter, as I am envisioning the notion, involves the aspect of experience that takes place between one and another. To explore this place between we must first understand what surrounds it, which is experience as a whole. I directly borrow Dewey’s term ‘educative’ to denote the particular kind of encounter I am developing and advocating for in higher education. Supporting these central ideas are Dewey’s thoughts on self, continuity and interaction; growth; truth and knowing; inquiry; direct experience and reflection; and finally, interest as related to educative encounter. And so, in this chapter, I provide analysis of Dewey’s work on experience as it pertains to educative encounter.

Of the many conceptions heavily relied upon in education, experience is one of the “most obscure that we have” (Jay, 2006, p. 11) with “multiple denotations and connotations” (Jay, 2006, p. 4). This conception is one that wears many hats, such as epistemological, “religious, aesthetic, political, and historical” (Jay, 2006, p. 5). Dewey addresses all these variants in his writings, though here I am primarily interested in Dewey’s epistemological writings.

Dewey states that “a positive and constructive development of progressive education’s own basic idea depends upon having a *correct idea of experience*” (1938, p. 20). The need for an understanding of experience, specifically, is because “the trouble is not the absence of experiences [in traditional schools], but their defective and wrong character – wrong and defective from the standpoint of connection with further experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 27). Dewey argues that for progressive education to avoid a similar trap of offering disconnected, disorderly, and therefore mis-educative, experiences (even if of a very different nature than traditional education), there must be a correct understanding of experience.

It seems, according to Dewey, the heart of the issue is not that there be experience in education, as it is indisputable that any education contains all sorts of experience; rather, the heart of the issue is the *quality* of that experience. I argue that the same pertains to educative encounter. I am not only making a case for educative encounters in education, but ones of quality. Quality refers to both how palatable the experience is in the present (force) and the effect of the experience, in how well it leads to future endeavors (function). As Dewey says, “Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live-creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of

living” (Dewey, 1981, p. 555). To live is to experience. We are alive so we are experiencing<sup>1</sup>. It follows then that all education consists of experiences; what is noteworthy is the potential that exists for offering educational experiences of good quality. Dewey wished for experiences that would “live fruitfully and creatively in future experiences” (Dewey, 1938, p. 28).

In ‘Experience and Education’ (1938) Dewey suggests both traditional and progressive educators recognize that not all experience is educative, rather, some experience is mis-educative and some experience, non-educative. Dewey suggests many ways that an experience may be mis-educative, for example, if it shuts down growth, promotes attitudes of callousness or carelessness, increases skills that lead only to a performance rut, or, is enjoyable but useless, disconnected and not cumulative (Dewey, 1938). The central concern regarding mis-educative experiences is that “the possibilities of having richer experience in the future are restricted” (Dewey, 1938, p. 26). The possibility of a richer experience is restricted by the “sins of commission and omission. On the one hand [miseducation] involves the yoking of cultural liabilities – for instance rape, murder, racism, dishonesty – to individual capacities. On the other, it constitutes a failure to yoke valuable cultural assets such as honesty, integrity, or kindness to capacities” (J. R. Martin, 2011, p. 116).

For instance, though an example based in informal learning, a mis-educative experience that comes to mind is my first time whitewater canoeing. At age 16, a group of friends and I decided to try out our canoeing skills on a whitewater river. In the very first set of rapids, the situation quickly got out of hand – quite literally for me, as both my

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<sup>1</sup> There are exceptions to this statement. A person in a vegetative state who may not sense or interact with the world cannot be said to experience in a Deweyan sense, but they are alive.

canoe and canoeing partner were swept down the river away from me. My canoe partner emerged screaming in pain and fear. He was not a good swimmer and had taken a serious knock on the knee. The canoe did not emerge until three months later once the river subsided; it spent the summer submerged, wrapped around a rock. I spent the rest of the day in ‘white knuckle’ fear in the middle of someone else’s canoe and did not attempt whitewater canoeing again for over five years, and even then only because it was mandatory for a university course in which I was enrolled. Now, almost 20 years later, the fact that I have spent many summers as a whitewater canoe guide is somewhat incredible, given that this first experience was mis-educative in the sense that it left me terrified of future experiences. Although I have managed to confront my fear, my whitewater paddling ability is still hampered by leftover trepidation from this very first experience. An educative experience, instead of leaving me fearful and shutting off interest, would have led me to being open to further experiences, not for the sake of whitewater canoeing, but for the sake of education, because it “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future” (Dewey, 1938, p. 31). There is a strong emotive aspect here, both *emotional* and *motivating*. Educative experiences make us feel and act in positive ways. It is apparent that quality, referring to force and function, connects directly to Dewey’s idea of educative experience. Force and function are helpful in considering educative encounter as well. It can be surmised that for an educative encounter to be one of quality requires force and function, and that the encounter is motivating, leading to growth in learners. To understand Dewey’s views on growth, it is also essential to understand his idea of ends-in-view.

### **Ends-in-view**

In light of pragmatism, when intelligently and imaginatively envisioning the future, it is paramount that the future envisioned is impending in order to pursue aims and goals as ends-in-view (Shade, 2001). “Ends are foreseen consequences which arise in the course of activity and which are employed to give activity added meaning and to direct its further course” (Dewey, 1922, p. 209). Rather than problematically deferring the gains of education to distant rewards and achievements, ends-in-view offer near and possible, though perhaps difficult, goals (Duncan-Andrade, summer 2009). This includes approaching every lesson by attempting to first connect with students’ lives. From this comes material for improved comprehension and skill development to be meaningfully engaged in the near future. The result will be an enlarging of students’ understanding or deeper transactions with the world. In this manner, the educator is attending to the daily learning of each student rather than letting something such as a test dictate lessons. Fulfilling each end-in-view successfully sustains the work of education because it highlights meaningful headway directed towards ongoing growth, When view. As such, when gotten, actions is not terminated, but redirected, becoming a means to further ends-in-view. Because pragmatism is not trying to reach a final truth that is believed to objectively exist outside of human experience (James, 1907), pragmatists strive for ends-in-view that are flexible and socially formed, and that lead to further fruitful activity. This discussion bears import on what Dewey views as the aims of education and on how he views growth, both of which are vitally pertinent to the notion of educative encounter.

## **Growth**

“Dewey often spoke of education as synonymous with growth and growth was one of his most important biological metaphors” (Noddings, 1995, p. 25). For Dewey, education “consists in an intelligent direction of native activities in the light of the possibilities and necessities of the social situation” (1922, p. 92) and is for the purposes of more education, as education is both a means and an end. By means and ends being one and the same, what Dewey means is that “‘End’ is a name for a series of acts taken collectively – like the term army. ‘Means’ is a name for the same series taken distributively – like this soldier, that officer” (Dewey, 1922, p. 35). Education and growth, in Dewey’s view, are synonymous. By growth, Dewey has in mind “the cumulative movement of action toward a later result” (1981, p. 484). Notice that this result is not a normative term. There are no criteria here saying that the results must be good. Dewey, however, seems to stand in contradiction with his own stance on telos, by showing concern with directing growth in positive directions such as “fostering of those habits and impulses which lead to a broad, just, sympathetic survey of situations” (1922, p. 194) to prepare students for democratic life. It is important to recognize Dewey’s strong commitment to growth for growth’s sake as this will come into play when identifying the ‘why’ of educative encounter.

Regarding conditions of growth, Dewey names immaturity, with the components of dependency and plasticity, as prerequisite conditions. Dewey cautions against viewing immaturity as a negative state of being, as though the immature is without or lacking. Rather, we should see the immature through the lens of what students do have, which is “the ability to develop” (Dewey, 1981, p. 484). Dependency can also be viewed as

weakness, but not according to Dewey. “Dependence denotes a power rather than a weakness; it involves interdependence” (p. 486). Plasticity is more than being externally sculpted, as is a lump of clay, but rather refers to the “ability to learn from experience” (Dewey, 1981, p. 487). In looking at immaturity (dependence and plasticity) as conditions of growth and habit as the means to growth, Dewey connects these to education. The connection rests on how development is conceptualized, which Dewey conceives as life; “life is development, and that developing, growing is life” (1981, p. 491). We can see, therefore, for Dewey, the intimate connection amongst life, experience and growth. Dewey also spoke of flourishing, in the same vein of biological metaphor as growth. “Dewey’s conception of individual human flourishing: the intelligent, effectual, enlarging, liberated individual” (Lee A. McBride, 2006, p. 72). This flourishing may occur in one organism, but not without a community that fosters such flourishing through interactions. Flourishing “promotes the liberation of powers, the enlargement of life’s meaning, and the growth of experience through enriched transactions with the world” (Seigfried, 2001, p. 221). These central concepts from Dewey’s writings contribute to some of the aims I have for educative encounter.

Experience, according to Dewey, is both passive and active, trying and undergoing. As he says, “doing becomes a trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction – discovery of the connections of things” (1981, p. 496). In typical Dewey fashion, he has exposed the problems of an ‘either/or’ picture of experience by providing a ‘both/and’ accounting of the term. It is easy to see how these complementary and essential elements of experience have been isolated from one another in education, where educators can lead students into an entirely

active undertaking or an entirely passive one. “The very word pupil has almost come to mean one who is engaged not in having fruitful experiences but in absorbing knowledge directly” (Dewey, 1981, p. 496). Isolated, neither element of doing and undergoing contributes to learning in the way that they do when united. “A separation of the active doing phase from the passive undergoing phase destroys the vital meaning of an experience” (Dewey, 1981, p. 505). Dewey identifies three problems that follow the isolation of doing and undergoing: the body is viewed as a distraction; the senses are seen as mysterious conduits; and things are emphasized, not relations amongst things. Connections are imperative. “An experience has a pattern and structure, because it is not just doing and undergoing in alternation, but consists of them in relationship” (Dewey, 1981, p. 562). From this, we can surmise that education relying on quality experience involves doing and undergoing in relationship where the body matters, the senses are given a place of consequence and it is the relation amongst things and between the learner and things that is the focus. All of this must be carried over to our understanding of educative encounter as well. To have an educative encounter, both doing and undergoing must be present. Rather than Dewey’s ‘doing’ of experience, in an experimenting with the world, the doing of educative encounter is geared towards relating to an ‘other’, which may be one’s self, another person or ideas, places and things. Educative encounter, like experience, cannot be all doing, nor can it be all passive.

Dewey’s view is that education is a process, and in his Pedagogic Creed he “attempts to sketch the necessary relationship between feeling, thought, and action, while opposing both dull academic formalism and sentimentalism”(Dewey, 1981, p. 442). The learning process, according to Dewey, must be rewarding during the process, not merely



afterwards. One way I have very literally interpreted this perspective of Dewey's is by having students in my adventure business class actually run a business during the semester. I did this based on two of my own experiences. In university I received a 'Certificate of Recreation and Tourism Management,' signifying that I had taken numerous courses in entrepreneurship, business management and commercial recreation. What I learned in those courses could not hold a candle to what I learned while running my own canoe tripping company for four years while a university student. I was determined that my own students not learn theories and principles of business to use at some later date. In compelling them to run a business, with the support of a class that was run like a business meeting for brainstorming, problem solving and accountability, there was opportunity to experiment and come up against obstacles to guide learning, and be rewarded for their attempts. Feeling, thought and action were engaged in the learning of these students, and must be engaged in educative encounter, for such an encounter occurs with the whole being, not segments of one's self.

Key, in Dewey's views on the nature of learning, is that the "active side precedes the passive" (1981, p. 450). He means this developmentally, but I think it has broad application, fitting both schooling as a whole as well as a short lesson. Passive learning occurs when the student is asked to listen and watch the instructor. The active would follow listening and watching if opportunity were given to try out what was being learned. Given Dewey's concern that the active precede the passive, I purport reversing the more typical passive pattern in education of 'listen, watch and possibly try' with an active-first pattern where students have opportunity to encounter indeterminate situations,

from which inquiry may arise. I turn attention next to how Dewey understands the who that encounters these indeterminate situations.

### **Self**

It is necessary to explore Dewey's ideas on self to offer a fulsome account of how a self is able to encounter its own self. When Dewey speaks of self, or selfhood, he speaks against a definition of a complete, fixed, isolated self. Rather, he says that selfhood "is in process of making, and that any self is capable of including within itself a number of inconsistent selves, of unharmonized dispositions" (Dewey, 1922, p. 130). There is something here in the recognition of unharmonized dispositions creating numerous selves that will allow for one to have educative encounters with one's self, while holding to the condition that educative encounter is dependent on meeting an 'other'. What stands out about Dewey's view of self as in process is that it opens the door for a self that is multi-dimensional, consisting of many 'others' if we understand other to mean one that has a different view, or that is able to say 'I'. There is something about encountering self as selves that rests on a measure of discord, for it seems only in recognizing different or even opposing selves within one's self that one can have educative encounter with one's self. Dewey's example of this potential internal discord is to point to Nero, saying that even he "may be capable upon occasion of acts of kindness" (Dewey, 1922, p. 130). Dewey states that the self is fluid and diverse. "There is no one ready-made self behind activities. There are complex, unstable, opposing attitudes, habits, impulses" (Dewey, 1922, p. 130). Dewey contrasts "a self taken as something already made and a self still making through action" (1922, p. 131) by spotlighting where

and how attention is directed. The following chart illustrates his comparison (Dewey, 1922).

Self	Made Self	Making Self
	Actions & Thoughts are withdrawn <b>Inwards</b>	Actions & Thoughts are directed <b>Outwards</b>
Self-Pity	Inability to learn from misfortune	Open mind to receiving new contacts
Self-Sacrifice	Self-maiming – a giving up in the present with expectation of compensation later	For growth, willingly surrendering prior acquisitions
Self-Confidence	“smug complacency that renders a person obtuse to instruction by events” (Dewey, 1922, p. 131).	“Directness and courage in meeting the facts of life, trusting them to bring instruction and support” (Dewey, 1922, p. 131).
Self-Control	Diminishing self by singular focus on own achievements without room for growth	Broadening self by having grasp of resources

In the first category, that of a made self, the problem is that “action has to contribute to profit or security or consolation *to* a self” (Dewey, 1922, p. 131, emphasis in original), while in the second category of making self “impulsive action becomes an adventure in discovery of a self which is possible but as yet unrealized, an experiment in creating a self which shall become more inclusive than the one which exists” (Dewey, 1922, p. 131). For Dewey a self is an ongoing creation through outward directed action based on impulse and habit, and it is possible for one person to have many selves. This self, composed of many selves, finds present experiences potentially influenced by prior experience, which Dewey calls continuity. It is to this we next turn our attention.

### **Continuity**

By continuity of experience, Dewey “means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (1938, p. 35). The something refers, in large part to habit,

broadly defined to encompass “the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding [mentally, emotionally, physically] to all the conditions which we meet in living” (Dewey, 1938, p. 35). There is always potential for continuity; the question is whether that potential will be realized in a manner that opens or closes opportunity for growth in future experiences. Consider, for instance, how early, enjoyable reading experience with parents prior to kindergarten will carry forward when reading is introduced in the classroom. Continuity matters to the notion of educative encounter because there is no relationship in isolation of all the other relationships a person has had or will have. This recognition is helpful especially when a student is resistant to or unable to engage in educative encounters. An educator can ask how continuity is potentially influencing this student. From considering continuity, we consider both interaction and transaction as ways a person encounters the present.

### **Interaction and Transaction**

Interaction, in Dewey’s terms, refers to the interplay between the internal conditions [i.e. “personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create” (1938, p. 44), as well as “powers and purposes” (1938, p. 45)] and the individual’s external world [i.e. “equipment, books, apparatus, toys, [words spoken, tone], games played, ... and social set-up” (1938, p. 45)]. This interaction forms a situation. The learner is located within this situation, as is the relation of educative encounter. Dewey later says that “[o]rder is not imposed from without but is made out of the relations of harmonious interactions that energies bear to one another” (1981, p. 536). A student is not isolated in their learning. To be responsible for a student’s learning is to be responsible for harmonious interactions

in the classroom to direct what is being made out of the relations. Teaching from an educative encounter perspective sets one up to do just this, because such harmonious interactions are essential to promoting educative encounters.

Unlike interaction, which consists of independent things interconnecting, transaction is a level of inquiry

where systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to ‘elements’ or other presumptively detachable or independent ‘entities,’ ‘essences,’ or ‘realities,’ and without isolation of presumptively detachable ‘relations’ from such detachable elements. (Dewey, 1989, p. xxxiv)

Dewey wrote of transaction to impart the import of system, including “objective conditions, cultural norms, and institutions” (Stitzlein, 2008, p. 5). Though he had advocated for interaction, he later preferred the term transaction, in part to diminish the presence of dualism in interaction as in the two agents interacting (McDermott, 1981).

<b>Distinguishing Term</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Transaction</b>
Description	Things enter into interaction already understood/described – what is in question is their present connection.	Things enter into transaction with only a tentative/preliminary understanding/description, so that the very events are able to be widened or narrowed in understanding at any point.
Names & Naming	All subject matters are already named and known, with only action and reaction to be described	Naming and knowing all subject matters are part of what is open to description.
Fact	Procedure consisting of separate facts.	To adequately understand facts, they must be considered in relation to other subject matters.
Elements	Regards particularization.	Regards widening knowledge within a system.

Distinguishing Term	Interaction	Transaction
Activity	Things are mostly static.	Things are in action, and action, when observed, is a thing.
Organism and Environment	“present as substantially separate existences...prior to their entry into joint investigation” (Dewey, 1989, p. 114)	“assumes no pre-knowledge of either organism or environment alone as adequate...requir[ing] their primary acceptance in common system” (Dewey, 1989, p. 114)
Knowing & Knowns	External acting on internal and internal acting on external.	“inclusive of all its ‘contents’ whether called ‘inners’ or ‘outers’” (Dewey, 1989, p. 114)
Inquiry in General	Beginning with certain procedures and prior assessments.	Proceeding in freedom and viewing the whole system.

(Dewey, 1989)

To summarize the differences, for interaction there are two (or more) independent actors connecting, while for transaction, “the organism is not taken as a ‘capacity’ apart from its environmental situation” (Dewey, 1989, p. 141), rather the process comes first, within which distinctions amongst organism and environment becomes more permeable.

“Elements we are used to conceiving as separate from each other are really *part of each other*” (Cutchin, 2007, p. 52S). “Bodies and their environments are transactionally co-constituted—composing and affecting one another in ways that, at times, render them inseparable or indistinguishable” (Stitzlein, 2008, p. 17). Transaction “is *how* we experience *what* we experience” (McDermott, 1981, p. xxv) through “an active and ongoing process of exchange and readjustment between the organism and the environment, whose beginnings and endings are only relative to specific events and purposes” (Stitzlein, 2008, p. 15).

Given that “every experience is a moving force” (Dewey, 1938, p. 38) in that it opens us up or closes us off from particular future experiences, the direction of that movement must be considered. Educators should be aiming for experiences that are

geared towards the learner's growth. In order for this to happen, the educator must firstly be able to judge how an experience is moving the learner, and, clearly, in order to do this, must know the learner. Secondly, recognition of the influence of the environment (social, physical, etc.) on the experience is necessary, particularly as to "what surroundings are conducive to growth" (Dewey, 1938, p. 40). Thirdly, the educator must be responsible for awareness of the internal conditions of the individual and for arranging the external world to be conducive to growing. An educator must be aware of, and contribute to, the transactions within which a learner finds herself, her internal conditions and external world in order to understand the learner and contribute to her education. This, for me, is a strong argument for the necessity of understanding experience as it relates to education and also understanding encounter as an aspect of experience. Encounter is the relational aspect of experience and is held in transaction. It would be fair to characterize my aim as focusing on a specific aspect of transaction, under the broad umbrella of experience. This specific aspect regards what is taking place in learning. To consider Dewey's views on learning, I next examine his ideas on truth and knowing.

### **Truth and Knowing**

The term 'knowing' suggests a process of inquiry rather than merely a static piece of information to be acquired, as the term 'knowledge' may imply. This is why Dewey prefers to speak of knowing over knowledge (Noddings, 1995). Dewey explores the "relational character of truth" (1981, p. 175), and, essentially, says that knowing "involves relationship" (1981, p. 177). One such relationship is between thinghood and reflected being. As he explains, "to be a smell (or anything else) is one thing, to be *known* as a smell, another" (1981, p. 178). In other words, to be a particular person, such as me,

is one thing but to be known as myself is another thing. I am Carrie Nolan and I am known as Carrie Nolan. Those that know me can only partially know me, and what is known to them of me is through their experience of me, yet there is more to me than what they know. “Dewey was a realist in the sense that the world exists independent of our thought of it, but the meaning *of* the world is inseparable from our *meaning* the world” (McDermott, 1981, p. xxv). Being and being known are not one and the same, in part because of the interpretive aspect others rely on when interacting with me. “Both the thing meaning and the thing meant are elements in the same situation” (Dewey, 1981, p. 181). We must shift our thinking from what we know about to the experience of knowing. A “thing – anything, everything, in the ordinary or non-technical use of the term” (Dewey, 1981, p. 241) is only what it is experienced to be to the one experiencing it. Going back to the example of myself, though I am a self, it is only through experience of me that I am known. It is not that there is no thing, or nothing (or no Carrie Nolan), without experience, but rather, that no ‘thing’ can be some ‘thing’ without being experienced – a subtle, but significant distinction. When having an educative encounter, Dewey’s ideas on knowing are helpful because we are reminded that it is not just the relation, but the experience of the relation that promotes an educative encounter.

“Like knowledge itself, truth is an experienced relation of things, and it has no meaning outside of such relation” (Dewey, 1981, p. 185). This stands in contrast to “the non-empirical account ... [which] puts *all* the error in one place (*our* knowledge), and *all* the truth in another (absolute consciousness or else a thing-in-itself)” (Dewey, 1981, p. 189). This is not actually the case, according to Dewey and other pragmatists. Truth is not out there for us to figure out. It arises from inquiry when we have an experience and



find it fulfilling or non-fulfilling of our expectations given relations. “Truth ... is just a name for an experienced relation among the things of experience” (Dewey, 1981, p. 192) and a discovery, in and through these experienced relations, of ‘what works.’ Knowledge is not mysterious, requiring all sorts of something before it can take place; rather it arises through the process of experience, elements of which are both things-in-themselves and the meaning we ascribe to things. Meaning-making happens through consideration of the relations, not just by considering the things in relation. A relation is more than the sum total of its parts, as conveyed in considering transaction, thus, meaning-making is expanded when the relation is taken into account in addition to considering the parts of the relation. This too is a clear argument for appreciating the importance of a clear conception of educative encounter. Even when we attend to experience in education, which we do not often enough, attention may go towards the things we are experiencing, rather than the relations amongst the things. Dewey places relations centrally when it comes to both truth and knowing. Understanding these relations through this notion of educative encounter has the potential to strengthen our efforts in promoting knowing and truth as parts of the educational process.

Often empiricism is focused on the knower and the known as two entities that are both contributing to experience. The knower is experiencing the known and the known is being experienced. Dewey reminds us that “the knowledge standpoint is itself experienced” (1981, p. 243). Like a Matryoshka doll (Russian nesting doll), Dewey is reminding us that the knower and the known are not two side by side dolls, but rather as the knower experiences the known, the knower is nested in the experience of her own knowledge standpoint. The coming discussion on educative encounter furthers this

discussion in considering when the known also has a standpoint, or is a knower. In this case, according to Dewey, there are two knowers, and two knowledge standpoints at play in an educative encounter. This confronts the assumption that everyone present in a moment will experience the same thing. This is not possible because of the experience of the knowledge standpoint while experiencing the thing. Dewey's account offers some challenging implications for this perspective given that much of our schooling, through curriculum and assessment, centers on the expectation that some things are known as same things. For instance, I believe his account has implications for standardized testing. If we test according to certain pieces of information we expect students to know because they have been taught such pieces, we leave no room to acknowledge what the role the identity of the learner plays in what is known. This role, however, appears enormous, especially when we consider knowing, as process of inquiry, rather than knowledge, a moment of acquisition. It is this process of inquiry that we next examine.

### **Inquiry**

The contents of experience “undergo change of meaning” (Dewey, 1981, p. 206) or undergo change of value, through the “art of reflection and invention” (Dewey, 1981, p. 206) both of which are parts of inquiry. In a sense, Dewey is saying that we have the capability, through inquiry, to influence the contents of experience, because they are transitive. Here, we have an epistemology presented (we know through inquiry) that has direct pedagogical implications (teach through inquiry). Dewey defines inquiry as “the directed or controlled transformation of an indeterminate situation into a determinately unified one” (1981, p. 237). As Stitzlein states,

Unlike more popular understandings of inquiry as simply a mental escape, Dewey's definition of inquiry entails a component of intelligent reflection, an

aspect of bodily change, and, importantly, a transformation of the situation, including both the objective conditions and the transaction between the organism and its environment. (2008, p. 89)

Furthermore, “the process of inquiry entails deliberation; ... an experimental practice of investigating which combinations of habits, impulses, and objective environs produce viable actions for addressing and alleviating the problem” (Stitzlein, 2008, p. 89).

Experience is both something that has happened and a process in which we engage.

Likewise, educative encounter, as the relational aspect of experience, is both an event and a process. As educators we can forget that when we are reflecting with a class on something that has happened we are still engaged in the process of experience; we are not merely post-experience. According to continuity, every experience has the potential to build into future experiences in a diminishing or growing way. It is important to recognize this for the pattern of inquiry, as described above, does not arise only in the present, nor isolated from other patterns of inquiry that we have engaged in. Our past experience provokes and leads us to desire, recognition, curiosity, relevant need, and perplexity of problem. There is an indeterminate situation that we enter and we want/need to make sense of it. This desire to make sense of an indeterminate situation is fundamental to beginning the pattern, and will be addressed in the section on interest. When we have that interest we begin the pattern of inquiry, which is not so different than what most of us commonly do daily. This is often how we solve problems, or at the very least is a good means to problem-solving: gather information, plan, observe and intuit, consider possibilities, predict, reason, decide, try, evaluate. As Dewey says, “every gallant life is an experiment in different ways of fulfilling it” (Dewey, 1922, p. 110).

An example of the process of inquiry in action in a classroom happened in my grade 13 'Science and Society' class. Our educator, Mr. Webster, had been following our town's efforts to locate a new waste disposal site. When he realized that the consultants hired to recommend where the new dump should be located were relying on criteria that was irrelevant to the geology of our area he knew he had identified a real problem and he knew who he could engage to help him tackle the problem – his students. Our entire semester became dedicated to addressing the problems of finding a new, appropriate dump site in the Parry Sound area and of showing how the consultants were mistaken. To address both problems took concerted efforts by all of us to research, plot, design, predict, act and communicate our actions. To show how the consultants were mistaken, we submitted our report to the town the day before the consultants' report was due. We identified what they would say was the best site, criticized their choice and made our own recommendations, and we did it all for the price tag of \$125. At a price tag of \$1.5 million, the consultants delivered their report, which was exactly as we predicted, without the criticisms. The town rejected their proposal based on our work. The only downside was that the town then had to hire new consultants to come up with new recommendations based on our own modified recommendations, because high school students are not qualified to tell a town where to build a dump. In this case our learning was directed by a real problem and allowed to lead somewhere fruitful, thus our learning experience was enhanced. This discussion, however, does not necessarily indicate that the educator tapped into students' questions as the basis for inquiry. The project could very well be only of interest to the educator. As a student in this course, I can attest firsthand that we were encouraged to pursue lines of inquiry within the context of the study that

interested us, but working with a live problem in a classroom does not guarantee that inquiry is generated by the students. A central part of this process was and is the trying and evaluating, which may also be termed experiencing and reflecting. It is to this we next turn our attention.

### **Direct Experience and Reflection**

Dewey introduces the idea of primary experience as essential to scientific method, and consequently, to philosophic method, for we have primary experience in matters both moral and religious, not just in matters scientific. By primary experience, Dewey means experience before cognitive reflection. Another way that I understand primary experience is firsthand or direct experience. I have been involved in giving ‘Species at Risk’ talks to students and I notice that there is a marked difference in the engagement of students when they are listening to secondhand facts about a fox snake as compared to when they are given the opportunity to handle a live fox snake. Even when we begin with a primary experience, we are entering into a beginning that has its roots in many other beginnings. We must also attend to the fact that “we have become habituated” (Dewey, 1981, p. 260) to have certain expectations and beliefs. For instance, many students already harbor primary experiences with snakes that were mis-educative, and therefore, want nothing to do with their new classroom visitor.

For Dewey, primary experience is essential in education that leads to growth. The importance of primary experience to the notion of educative encounter is that in it, Dewey is advocating for a certain type of educative experience, and in this case, educative encounter, one that sees the student engaging in a direct, lived manner with what is to be learned. Without this reliance on primary experience, Dewey warns of

“three evils” (1981, p. 255) of philosophic work: no verification; no “enlargement and enrichment of meaning” (1981, p. 255) of things of ordinary experience; and a certain abstractness to the work. Dewey cautions, however, that education is not all about primary experience. Dewey places primary experience in process. An object is experienced. By object what is first meant is “gross, primary experience” (Dewey in McDermott, 1981, p. 256) of what is at hand, soon to become the “refined objects of reflection” (Dewey in McDermott, 1981, p. 256). These two categories of object, things and thought, are not meant to be considered dualistically, but holistically. Included, when object is said, then, are emotions, ideas and even an event such as a moral situation. Once experienced, a problem may be posed by the experience or a question is raised.

Experimentation and study ensues and the object/understanding of object is refined through reflection, after which, the original experience is returned to in order to ‘test out’ new ideas/conclusions/conceptions. Dewey defines reflection in experience as “the discernment of the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence” (1981, p. 499). It may also be referred to as secondary experience. This discernment is ongoing, happening all the time. When we can link present consequences to prior action, we are reflecting. Without reflection, experience has no connection to learning. It is difficult to consider how to both teach students to discern or pay attention to their discernment and how to make it a welcome, ongoing part of the educational process, including educative encounter. When one starts with interest, there is more likelihood of carrying through with reflection.

### **Interest**

To engage students in the process of inquiry and ensure both direct experience and reflection occurs, we must begin with the interests of the students, recognizing that there will be great diversity in any given classroom. Dewey helpfully categorizes interests, making a great range manageable if, as educators, we regularly tap into “the fourfold interests of children: making things (construction), finding out (inquiry), expressing themselves artistically, and communicating” (Noddings, 1995, p. 29). It is important to understand Dewey’s take on interest because of the phases of interest he identifies: active, objective and subjective. The active phase concerns the initial taking of interest. The objective phase is that with which interest is taken, the end point of the interest. The subjective phase regards attributing a sense of worth, based on feelings, to the object. Dewey goes on to explore each phase more fully, and leads us to consider immediate and mediate experience of interest. His concern with mediate experience relates to the relationship between means and ends, which Dewey sees as a vital relationship. The means to an end should not be separated from the end, as already mentioned. The role interest plays in education is to function as motivation, “to arouse energy, to stimulate the means necessary to accomplish the realization of ends” (Dewey, 1981, p. 437). Interest, if used pedagogically well, will help a student learn material and learn persistence and character. In the matter of educative encounter, interest will help students be open to relating to others, potentially leading to educative encounters.

Connection of the student to the world about her should be made. For instance, Dewey enlarges the relational perspective beyond just that of educator and child or educator and parent. He also states that “No number of object-lessons, got up as object-lessons for the sake of giving information, can afford even the shadow of a substitute for

acquaintance with the plants and animals of the farm and garden acquired through actual living among them and caring for them” (Dewey, 1981, p. 458). This is pointing to Dewey’s conviction that schooling must be connected to “methods of living and learning” (1981, p. 459), which educative encounter accomplishes for relationships are at the heart of living and learning. He speaks about the change this type of education brings about, “the change from more or less passive and inert reciprocity and restraint to one of buoyant outgoing energy” (1981, p. 460).

Dewey’s suggestion for educators is to act as both interpreter and guide. As interpreter, the educator pays close attention to the child’s environment and inclinations, and is prepared to both understand the child, and help the child understand him or herself. As guide, the educator leads the student out from him or herself to a broader world in strong connective ways. “Development does not mean just getting something out of the mind. It is development of experience and into experience that is really wanted” (Dewey, 1981, p. 476). Acknowledging the demands on an educator’s time, thought and life, Dewey’s antidote is to “keep [the child’s] nature and arm it with knowledge in the very direction which it points” (1981, p. 494).

### **Summary of Dewey**

Learning, from Dewey’s definition of experience, is relational, active and passive. Roberts describes Dewey’s approach to education, founded in experience, as “a deeply contextual, action-oriented epistemology that allowed for the contingencies of a changing world” (2008, p. 22). What Dewey clearly offers us regarding experience is that the quality of experience varies greatly. To offer high quality experience, we must attend to both force and function by considering how desirable an experience is in the present and



considering where the experience is leading. In doing so, we may foster educative experience that is conducive to growth, with which education is synonymous. Experience is both doing (active) and undergoing (passive), and is tied to continuity, in that every prior experience may contribute in some way to the current experience, and to interaction, the relation of the one experiencing to their surroundings and to others in the experience. Truth and knowing are both processes of inquiry based on relation. Part of this process is direct experience and reflection, and necessary to entering the process is interest. This analysis of Dewey provides a solid understanding of his conception of experience, within which I want to place my notion of educative encounter. His ideas also lend themselves to arguments for the necessity of understanding educative encounter.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **PHILOSOPHERS OF ENCOUNTER – BUBER**

Buber is the philosopher in this dissertation that most directly addresses encounter. He is also the most esoteric philosopher of the three central figures upon whose work I rely. These two facts make the analysis of his ideas both crucial and challenging. In applying Buber's philosophy of dialogue to education, Buber challenges educators to not only share what they know with their students, but to know their students, and through this, help their students meet one another. It is this realm of knowing, and its influences on teaching and learning through dialogue that Buber's work most precisely guides this discussion on educative encounter. In order to set the stage for Buber's ideas on I-Thou encounter, I first consider his views on education, including his analysis of mutuality and trust, working with students' interest in both construction and communion, comparison of traditional versus progressive education, the role of Hasidism in influencing how the student is viewed and how education can be well stewarded, and finally, character education as a central aim of education. What is of signal interest in Buber's work for this dissertation is his notion of I-Thou encounter, namely, what it means to meet another. In order to fully understand his discussion of I-Thou encounter, Buber's ideas on dialogue, experience and knowledge also need to be examined.

#### **Buber**

Born in 1878, 19 years after Dewey, Buber lived 87 years, passing away in 1965 (Friedman, 1991). In the lifetime of these two philosophers both world wars occurred, shaping the work that each did. From his birth in Vienna, Austria, to his death in Jerusalem, Buber's Jewish heritage and identity shaped how he lived his life and what he wrote, more so as a cultural Zionist adhering to the spiritual principles rather than religious practices of the Jewish life (Friedman, 1991). The three main areas of Buber's writing were "the philosophical articulation of the dialogic principle (*das dialogische Prinzip*), the revival of religious consciousness among the Jews..., and to the realization of this consciousness through the Zionist movement" (Zank, 2007, para. 1). For this dissertation, it is his work on dialogic relation and education that aids in the development of the notion of educative encounter.

### **Education**

For Buber, education "means a conscious and willed 'selection by man of the effective world'" (in Friedman, 1976, p. 176). It is not just that the educator chooses and offers this selection to students, but that the educator "makes himself the living selection of the world, which comes in his person to meet, draw out, and form the pupil" (Friedman, 1976, p. 176); "then the holy spark leaps across the gap" (Buber in Biemann, 2002, p. 235) between educator and pupil. In other words, education involves influence. With my life, as educator, I influence your life, as student. Active doing is an integral part of teaching in this manner. A primary relationship of educative encounter is thus between educator and student; from this relationship other educative encounters are fostered or influenced. It is because this relationship between student and educator potentially serves as a primary educative encounter that it must be explored.

## **Mutuality and Trust**

The pupil comes in many forms: “the misshapen and the well-proportioned, animal faces, empty faces, and noble faces in indiscriminate confusion, like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all” (Buber in Friedman, 1976, p. 176). A necessary precondition of education, as Buber conceives it, is this receiving. An educator will not teach those pupils whom she has not met and received in a manner of genuine mutuality, which requires trust of the child that the educator is really there for her. Education is, therefore, dependent on relationship, and more specifically this primary relationship and its potential for fostering educative encounter.

No matter the nature of the pupil, in Buber’s estimation, the educator must be able to experience, or accurately perceive the student’s experience. The colloquial saying that captures what I sense Buber means in saying we must experience another’s side is to ‘walk a day in another man’s shoes,’ though Buber does not purport that one bracket one’s self by putting one’s self aside to experience the other. His experiencing the side of the other is a two-sided sensation – knowing one’s own side and the side of the other (1947/2002). This idea is not without its challenges, which will be considered further on. For now, we must first accept and attempt to understand this central idea before objecting. For Buber, knowing the other side encapsulates his concept of inclusiveness. The essence of dialogic relation and that upon which education rests, according to Buber, is “the extension of one’s own concreteness, the fulfillment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates” (1947/2002, p. 115). No single educator can consistently provide attention at all times to every child in a

classroom setting. Genuine mutuality and trust, however, establishes a sense in the child that the educator is present in a consistent and available manner. What is learned from such relation is “trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists – this is the most inward achievement of the relation in education” (Buber in Friedman, 1976, p. 176). There are no facts that could be learned that would overshadow the effect of learning to trust in the world. A person who trusts in the world trusts that there is willingness in others to receive her, that she matters, that life is not meaningless. Moral philosopher Annette Baier delineates trust as a relational notion, in that “A trusts B with valued thing C” (1986, p. 236). This leads us to ask with what is A, the student, trusting B, the world as represented by educator and others in the classroom. In this case, of trusting in the world, I would say the valued thing is the student herself. A trusts B with A. As Buber says, trust in the world means that “in the darkness the light lies hidden, in fear salvation, and in the callousness of one’s fellow-men the great Love” (1947/2002, p. 116). Buber wants a pupil to be able to trust that his educator “is not making a business out of him, but is taking part in his life, accepting him before desiring to influence him” (1947/2002, p. 126). Learning to trust the world in the manner described is a backbone of educative encounter and what will open the student up to future educative encounters. What will also open up the student to future educative encounters is tapping into student interest in both construction and communion.

### **Construction and Communion**

As with educational philosopher Hannah Arendt's views on natality (1961/2008), Buber reminds us that "every hour the human race begins" (1947/2002, p. 98). Education plays a vital part in this renewal and constant beginning. "If it [education] at last rises up and exists indeed, it will be able to strengthen the light-spreading force in the hearts of doers" (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 99). A child wants a part in this, to be a conductor in the production, that "by one's own intensively experienced action something arises that was not there before" (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 101). This is the instinct of origination. In the classroom, as in life, there must be an undertaking in which to share and a relation to enter. Undertaking relates to the instinct of origination while relation connects to the instinct of communion. Education must not be relegated to one or the other instinct, but too often it is relegated to the instinct of origination, which when severed from relation serves to damage the potential for mutuality with the world. The instinct of communion "is the longing for the world to become present to us as a person, which goes out to us as we to it, which chooses and recognizes us as we do it, which is confirmed in us as we in it" (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 104). From this, we can intuit that educative encounter meets the instinct for communion and leads to more fruitful exploration of the instinct of origination. Educative encounter must also find itself somewhere between what Buber criticizes as funnel education and pump education.

### **Funnel vs. Pump**

As in Dewey's *Experience and Education*, in which Dewey points to a way of educating that avoids the either/or of traditionalism and progressivism, Buber attempts the same. Buber calls traditional education 'funnel' education, where the student passively receives knowledge as it is poured in. Progressive education, on the other hand,

can be metaphorically understood, according to Buber, as the ‘pump’ of a well, where the knowledge and power of the student are drawn forth as water from the well. Buber, however, finds neither view satisfactory, stating that the pupil must be active, unlike in the funnel metaphor, but it needs to be recognized the pupil is not the sole source for knowledge, as in the pump metaphor. “No real learning takes place unless the pupil participates, but it also means that the pupil must encounter something really ‘other’ than himself before he can learn” (Friedman, 1976, p. 177). This idea of encountering something really other will be imperative in the ensuing discussion of educative encounter, especially regarding encountering self. How the self is an ‘other’ must be explained. What makes something or someone an ‘other’ must also be delineated.

One of the struggles for progressive educators is trying to educate in a manner that does not depend on compulsion (Buber, 1947/2002). If, however, as Buber notes, compulsion is replaced with total freedom, the student may run amok and learn little. Instead, Buber argues, it is necessary to see that communion, not freedom, is the opposite of compulsion. Communion is accomplished by integrating students as full participants in the classroom endeavor. Learning best occurs with “the participation of the knower in that which is known” (Friedman in Buber, 1947/2002, p. xix) when the knower is “opened up and drawn in” (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 108). Buber is not against intellectual instruction, yet, “it is only really important when it arises as an expression of a real human existence” (Friedman, 1976, p. 178). This is argument for educative encounter beyond that between educator and student. Students must encounter each other, the subject matter, the broader world and themselves in an educative manner to educate in a manner of communion rather than compulsion or total freedom. Considering Buber’s

ideas based in Hasidism helps expand our thinking on the role of communion in learning, so it is to this our attention is next turned.

### **Hasidism and Education**

Shekina, teshuvah and shiflut are three key ideas for education that stem from Buber's Hasidic beliefs. In connecting these religious terms to education, I rely on Sean Blenkinsop's (2005a) work in his article '*Martin Buber: Educating for Relationship*'. The Hebrew term Shekina refers to the divine indwelling, for as Buber states "no thing can exist without a divine spark" (Buber, 1958a, p. 49). Blenkinsop offers a metaphor for Buber's God in the form of a double rainbow. The first rainbow is strong and solid in color, representing God's eternal self, intact and existing in heaven. The second rainbow is the fainter one we catch glimpses of behind the first rainbow. This rainbow represents:

'shattered' unity...the 'exiled glory of God' (Buber, 1958a, p. 81) that is spread out in little pieces within each and every animal, vegetable and mineral on this temporal Earth, and that piece of the shekina 'burns' within each one. In Hasidism people are responsible for finding, drawing forth and 're-connecting' these scattered pieces and they must approach every object with the intent of uncovering that spark, uniting it with their own and, ultimately, uniting all the sparks and returning them to God. (Blenkinsop, 2005a, p. 290)

This relates to education in that the role of the educator is to seek out and see the spark of the divine in each student and to work to relate in such a manner as to unify that spark with the world. It seems that educative encounter is one means to re-connecting these sparks.

The second term, teshuvah, means conversion, which to Buber "signified a total reorientation of one's existence that is not instantaneous but is an ongoing process involving hard, thoughtful work" (Blenkinsop, 2005a, p. 291). This idea of turning relates to education in that it is the student who does the turning, though not in isolation. An



educator must offer help, hope, challenge and space for the student to pursue his own growth. It will take educative encounter with oneself to promote turning. For Buber, it is not turning for turning's sake, but turning towards wholeness or unity with God.

Shiflut translates as humility. "Humility is about becoming from within and translating that understanding of self into action" (Blenkinsop, 2005a, p. 293). As educators we need humility, in part to recognize that a student's becoming their own self is to their own credit, not ours, and in part to support the responsibility of forming relations with our students and teaching them to relate to one another. If the educator places herself above her students in a haughty or proud manner, educative encounter will not occur. Humility supports the responsibility for an educator's relations with his students, in part, by creating in him a willingness to learn from them. Humility is also a part of character education, where our consideration goes next.

### **Character Education**

Buber thought that "education worthy of the name is essentially education of character" (Friedman, 1976, p. 180) for an educator must teach the whole person. Character is understood by Buber to be "the desire to shoulder responsibility...for everything essential that he meets" (in Friedman, 1976, p. 182) in dialogic relation. Part of education of character is helping students in desiring to take, and in taking, real responsibility for their decisions. This helping involves influencing the student, but this must be done with great caution. Imposition will only result in students rebelling, rejecting, or mimicking the educator. Discovering and nourishing in a student that which is within them or potentially in them that is caring and competent can bring about a better outcome. One of the most fundamental attitudes of educators that educate according to

encounter and relation for the goal of character development is recognizing “each of his pupils as a single, unique person, the bearer of a special task of being which can be fulfilled through him and through him alone” (Friedman, 1976, p. 181). In each student there exists a struggle between becoming this unique person able to bear their special task and all that would oppose this becoming. For this growth to occur, help is sometimes needed from the educator, given through “his meeting with this person who is entrusted to his care” (Buber in Friedman, 1976, p. 181) in, I purport, an educative encounter manner. This requires not that an educator be void of values, but that an educator allow “them to come to flower in a student in a way that is appropriate to the student’s personality” (Friedman, 1976, p. 181).

A dominant theme throughout Buber’s ideas on education is that of the educator meeting the student. Buber’s meaning regarding this meeting and how it occurs must be explored because this meeting is fundamental to the notion of educative encounter that I am developing. It is for this reason that we next turn our attention by considering Buber’s I-Thou encounter.

### **I-Thou**

For Buber, the trajectory toward thinking and writing about encounter began in mysticism, traveled through existentialism before coming to full fruition in dialogical philosophy. This trajectory began and stayed rooted in concern that the relation between the world and the individual was problematic. Effort is required for this relation to be realized; effort that can be characterized as true action or a whole being effort. Working of the whole being toward relation must be anchored in love, not defined as a feeling but as “the responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*” (in Friedman, 1976, p. 59).

Buber starts by considering what it means to identify oneself as an 'I'. When you recognize yourself as an 'I,' you recognize yourself as distinct from everything else. It is impossible to acknowledge yourself as an 'I' without this distinction. The 'everything else' from which you are distinguishing yourself is not categorically the same. Buber places this 'everything else' in two categories, the categories of 'It' and 'Thou'.

Whenever a person says 'I,' there is one of two possibilities actually being said; either I-It or I-Thou (Buber, 1958b). Thus, Buber characterizes 'I' or self by kinds of relation (N. Noddings, 2002b). There is never an 'I' without the presence of an 'It' or the presence of a 'Thou' because to say 'I' or be an 'I' is to be distinct from all else. 'I' is a primary word that is spoken only in combination with 'It' or 'Thou,' even if 'It' or 'Thou' remain unspoken. 'I' is not a solitary concept that stands alone unconnected; it is always 'I' in relation to 'It' or 'Thou.' This relation indicates the two ways in which we relate to the world. The world, distinct from us, is either a world of objects or a world of subjects. This holds true in a classroom. A student, and educator for that matter, will necessarily view others in the classroom as objects, actors on the stage of her life, there to play a role in her education. When she can see these others as subjects as well, in that each person present is a leading character, not merely a backdrop to her own life and stories, she is ready for I-Thou encounter. As educators, we must consider how we view our students, how they view us and each other, so that we may facilitate opportunity for subject-subject or I-Thou encounter to help build students' capacity for both learning and relating. How this can happen is of supreme interest to Buber and to the developing notion of educative encounter.

This relation between an 'I' and a 'Thou,' how one subject relates to another subject, when it is not a thing we are relating to but an 'other,' is what we must consider to fully understand the ideal educative encounter. When I-Thou is spoken, what is transpiring is an encounter of the other as itself or herself. Part of this involves recognizing the other to have inherent value and identity, not just in connection to our value and identification with this other. A common example can illustrate the point, an experience that has happened for many of us, especially those that grew up in small towns, is that of running into an educator outside of the classroom. I remember the first time this happened to me. I was fascinated to see Miss Ironside on a date at the movies. It was so striking to realize that my educator had a life outside of the classroom. This moment of fascination/realization encapsulates much of what Buber is saying about the two ways of relating to the world. Most of our encounters and most of the ways we relate to the world are in I-It, or subject-object, ways. A chance meeting outside of the classroom shakes up this typical way of relating to an educator because we, as students, are given opportunity to see, or more aptly, we are confronted with the recognition that our educator is an 'other,' with a life separate from our own. This recognition is imperative for the relation to become an I-Thou encounter. How this can occur within the constraints of familiarity of the classroom will need to be explored in defining educative encounter.

When one recognizes that a person distinct from one's self is indeed more than a thing in one's world, rather an 'other' that can also speak 'I,' the potential for I-Thou meeting exists. For this potential to be realized, there are three conditions that support this realization: real mutual action; meaning making; and confirmation (Buber, 1958b).

Real mutual action consists of being bound up in relation, actively sharing of yourself and receiving the other self. Meaning making comes from this give and take.

Confirmation is sensing and accepting, in the present, the consequence of this relation.

These three defining elements depend on “openness, directness...and presence”

(Friedman in Buber, 1947/2002, p. xii). When an I-Thou encounter occurs I am meeting the other as an ‘other’ with openness, directness and presence by means of real mutual action, meaning and confirmation. “This person is other, essentially other than myself ... I confirm it; I wish his otherness to exist, because I wish his particular being to exist”

(Buber, 1947/2002, pp. 71-72). This recognition of an ‘other’ is both straightforward and profoundly difficult to achieve. Buber uses the context of marriage to illustrate the pain and glory of this achievement:

But to this [truth] we are led by marriage, if it is real, with a power for which there is scarcely a substitute, by its steady experiencing of the life-substance of the other as other, and still more by its crises and the overcoming of them which rises out of the organic depths, whenever the monster of otherness, which by now blew on us with its icy demons’ breath and now is redeemed by our risen affirmation of the other, which knows and destroys all negation, is transformed into the mighty angel of union of which we dreamed in our mother’s womb.  
(1947/2002, p. 72)

Otherness can threaten, which is why I-Thou relation is a challenge and an achievement; wishing that other to exist in his otherness is essential to I-Thou encounter. It is profoundly difficult, for recognizing an ‘other’ means relinquishing our ideas of this person or this thing and receiving him wholly, with his own will, ideas, and values. If we are unable to do so, we relegate all relations to the realm of I-It, for what is the most difficult aspect of I-Thou encounter is the most necessary, that being the presence and recognition of the other.

This receiving of the other connects, in part, to two movements of humans, as identified by Buber, those being distance and relation. In Buber's terms, the distance does not make for an isolated self. Putting things at a distance or "seeing the world as a world" enables relating. "The first movement shows how man is possible, the second how man is realized. Distance proves the human situation, relation provides man's becoming in that situation" (Friedman, 1976, p. 80). Buber suggests that people are to be understood through their relations. The I-Thou relationship is not an aspect of the self, but "the existential and ontological reality in which the self comes into being and through which it fulfills and authenticates itself" (Buber, 1947/2002). In Buber's account, we can see the difficulty and necessity of learning to encounter the world in an I-Thou manner.

Buber is not against relating to the world in an I-It manner; rather his concern regards a life entirely separated from I-Thou. I-It is a necessary way of seeing and interacting with the world, but when it is the only way one is capable of interacting with the world, it is harmful. In Buber's perspective it is out of I-Thou that I-It should arise. An I-It attitude is not wrong; what is wrong is when that way of thinking and being is separated rather than rooted in I-Thou encounters. The results of such wrong are hardened humans incapable of relation to others as subjects rather than merely objects. Instead, what is necessary is the alternation or interweaving between I-It and I-Thou, the impersonal and personal, "the world to be 'used' and the world to be 'met'" (Buber, 1958b, p. ix). For instance, Buber gives the example of considering a tree. While his approach and empirical observations may garner an I-It knowing, that can include classification, movement, visual, and mathematical descriptions, it is when, with both "will and grace, that in considering the tree I become bound up in relation to it" (Buber,

1958b, p. 7). This binding relation has no pre-condition of giving up the other ways of knowing the tree, but the relation has a way of unifying the ways of knowing, for as Buber says, “without ‘It’ man cannot live. But he who lives with ‘It’ alone is not a man” (1958b, p. 34).

The question may be raised as to the delicacy of Buber’s I-Thou encounter. Is it too delicate to be taught or to happen with any sort of consistency? Given that Buber points to the necessity of both will, which is within our means to exert, and grace, which is not, I find that Buber’s I-Thou encounter may best serve as a regulative ideal, something towards which educative encounter aims. In education, we may ready ourselves and students for I-Thou encounters through fostering trust, mutual action, meaning making and confirmation, but we may not engineer such encounters as these encounters depend on the actions of more than one person. When something is not controllable, in the sense of being able to induce it to occur, there may be a tendency to avoid that something, such as I-Thou encounter, however, I suggest that there are many things not within an educators control that still fall within an educator’s responsibility. One such means to accomplishing responsibility for learning readiness for I-Thou encounter is through dialogue, to which attention is next turned.

### **Dialogue**

Dialogue is commonly understood as a conversation between two or more people. Buber, however, meant something that runs much deeper. He terms it dialogic relation, which is the unfolding of the “sphere of between” (Friedman, 1976, p. 85) and what is the remainders of the encounter that are more than either of the participants. The first precondition of dialogic relation is the meeting of a neighbor, “i.e., not man in general,

but the man who meets me time and again in the context of life” (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 60). Buber’s dialogic relation must occur in the face to face meeting or mutual contact of one another; “the genuinely reciprocal meeting in the fullness of life between one active existence and another” (Buber in Biemann, 2002, p. 225). In this meeting there is no generic way of proceeding, rather it is the particulars of possibilities and desirables in this encounter that direct the way forward.

A barrier to dialogic relation is when one or more participants put their attention towards how they appear rather than how they are in actuality. If one is willing to be in an encounter, then there is opportunity for dialogue, but if one is only able to present how one wants to be seen, then dialogue is stunted. Why one would choose seeming over being relates to the human desire to be confirmed, or to be received as a person. For a dialogical relation to occur, a necessary precondition is overcoming appearance. If the “thought of one’s effect as speaker outweighs the thought of what one has to say, then one inevitably works as a destroyer” (Friedman, 1976, p. 87).

Dialogical relation is the foundation of genuine dialogue, which is not necessarily spoken. This is where two or more are gathered and invested in establishing mutual relation. This is different than monologue, which is sometimes disguised as what most people think of as dialogue because more than one person is often involved. A monologue involving more than one person is actually one person speaking to or past rather than with another. This is different than technical dialogue, which has the sole purpose of conveying objective understanding. Genuine dialogue transpires where two beings are in communion, giving and receiving messages for the purposes of relation.



A condition of dialogue is inclusion, essentially knowing all available points of view present and feeling the occurrence from other's perspectives than one's own. Buber provides the following example to explain what he means by this:

A man belabors another, who remains quite still. Then let us assume that the striker suddenly receives in his soul the blow which he strikes: the same blow; that he receives it as the one who remains still. For the space of a moment he experiences the situation from the other side. Reality imposes itself on him. What will he do? Either he will overwhelm the voice of the soul, or his impulse will be reversed. (1947/2002, p. 114)

To actually accomplish this necessitates love; not love as a feeling that lives in me, but as a responsibility between I-Thou. Love exists in one's loving relations (Buber, 1958b), which in part happens through "the recognition of the other's freedom, the fullness of a dialogue in which I turn to my beloved in his otherness, independence, and self-reality with all the power of intention of my own heart" (Friedman in Buber, 1947/2002, p. xv). The elements of inclusion are a relation, an event shared, and a living through the event from the other's standpoint. Dialogue is "the response of one's whole being to the otherness of the other, that otherness that is comprehended only when I open myself to him in the present and in the concrete situation and respond to his need even when he himself is not aware that he is addressing me" (Friedman in Buber, 1947/2002, p. xvi).

We are being addressed when we are living. Not all that we meet address us, as such we must be aware of, and looking for signs. Much of our meeting takes place between us and other humans, but this is not the entirety of our meeting. I can meet a tree, and the tree can be a sign or be saying something to me. The difference, according to Buber, is that I will never be a Thou for the tree. While I may give a message or a sign to another, such as a tree, will never receive my messages. Aspects, therefore, of a life of dialogue, are "the sphere of the between, mutual confirmation, making the other present,

overcoming appearance, genuine dialogue, experiencing the other side, personal wholeness, ... responsibility, decision, direction, trust” (Friedman, 1976, p. 97).

Dialogue, as delineated by Buber, is essential to educative encounter, as there would be no educative encounter if there was no dialogue.

Mis-meeting occurs, in part, when we miss the signs and therefore do not respond to the other. One such mis-meeting left an indelible mark on Buber, when a troubled young man came to his office heavily burdened with the question of whether life was worth living. Buber welcomed him and answered the questions he was asked, not knowing that the young man was making a life or death decision in that meeting. Two months after this young man’s visit friends of the young man came to tell Buber what his visit had meant. After talking with Buber, the young man did not decide to take his life in the sense of suicide, but “no longer opposing [his] own death” (Friedman, 1991, p. 80) went away to the front in WWI and gave up his life. Buber recognized later that he had “withheld himself” (Friedman, 1991, p. 81) and, in consequence, he failed to hear the questions the young man was not overtly asking regarding trust in existence and whether his life was meaningful. When mis-meeting occurs, opportunity for dialogic relation is closed off. This concept comes into play further on when educative encounter is held up in contrast to mis-educative encounter and non-educative encounter. First, we must consider Buber’s ideas on experience.

### **On Experience**

While I am defining educative encounter as an aspect of experience that describes the relational part of experience, including the space between one and another, Buber defines experience differently. In his view experience relates to detached subjectivity while encounter arises out of life (Friedman, 1976). In describing I-It, one is describing experience; when one describes I-Thou, one is describing relation, or encounter, on Buber's account (1958b). I-Thou encounters are realized when the other becomes a presence to me rather than an experience (in Biemann, 2002). While this has the potential to frustrate any effort to describe and compare Dewey's ideas with Buber's ideas, my sense is that it is a matter of semantics. Buber's ideas on encounter fit with Dewey's ideas on experience, but more must be said on how Buber defined experience.

According to Buber, "I-It is the primary word of experience and using, taking place within a man and not between him and the world. Hence it is entirely subjective and lacking in mutuality" (Friedman, 1976, p. 57). When I hear someone playing the piano, I experience 'It,' the object of music. I hear notes; emotions are evoked. This is experience of the I-It. Encountering an 'other' though is much different than being an audience member watching or listening to something unfold. There is participation. I contribute the 'note' of myself while meeting the 'note' of the other. This is not one object and another, jostling for space, because while the context of I-It is limited by time and space, the context of I-Thou is the center where relations meet. For Buber, this center is the Eternal Thou or God. How this theist grounding figures into my work in this dissertation will be addressed in Chapter Five. Unlike I-It interactions, where space is limited, in I-Thou, one note can fill the space or two notes can fill the space and actually make each other louder (more present) by vibrating off of one another (Versluis, 2010).

An I-Thou relation is one of notes, or subjects, encountering rather than one of subject-object. A challenge to the interweaving of I-It and I-Thou is that “the world of objects in every culture is more extensive than that of its predecessor” (Buber, 1958b, p. 37). Not only are objects increasingly abundant, but skill in experiencing and using, which belong to the realm of I-It, comes seemingly, at the cost in ability to relate to the world as I-Thou. On Buber’s account, a responsibility of education is to help students face the abundance of objects and grow in ability to relate.

For Buber, then, experience is I-It encounter and relation is I-Thou encounter. I think that relation is part of experience, but a particular type of experience, so I wish to preserve Dewey’s use of the word experience and allow that, just as the world is twofold in that when ‘I’ is said, it is either I-It or I-Thou, experience is twofold as well, either subject-object or subject-subject. Both experiences hold the potential for educative encounter depending on how the experiences are had, which will be described at the end of Chapter Five. With this understanding of Buber’s views of experience, care is next taken to understand his views of knowledge.

### **Knowledge**

Between the universal and the particular lies the meeting of people, and it is in this participation in the universal and the particular that truth is formed, rather than in “conformity between a proposition and that to which the proposition refers” (Friedman, 1976, p. 161). Here we see how Buber’s definition of truth resonates both with Dewey’s pragmatic perspective and Noddings’ care theory. For the latter, it resonates because “it cannot claim universal validity yet it can be exemplified and symbolized in actual life” (Friedman, 1976, p. 161). In Buber’s I-Thou, an entirely different way of knowing is offered. It is different because most of Western epistemology has typically been

concerned with subject-object knowledge. Friedman offers us a concise account of the variations of this subject-object relationship of knowing that make up the trajectory of most major, western approaches to epistemology:

First of all, differences in emphasis as to whether the subject or the object is the more real – as in rationalism and empiricism, idealism and materialism, personalism and logical positivism... Secondly, as to the nature of the subject, which is variously regarded as pure consciousness, will to life, will to power, the scientific observer, or the intuitive knower. ... Thirdly, as to the nature of the object-whether it is material reality, thought in the mind of God or man, pantheistic spiritual substance, absolute and eternal mystical Being, or simply something which we cannot know in itself but upon which we project our ordered thought-categories of space, time, and causation.... Finally, as to the relation between subject and object: whether the object is known through dialectical or analytical reasoning, scientific method, phenomenological insight into essence, or some form of direct intuition. (1976, p. 163)

Buber is not trying to do away with I-It ways of relating; rather, he is trying to root such relating and knowing in I-Thou relation. Dialogical knowing comes through such relations in a direct, but not unmediated manner. The relation is mediated by both senses and the use of language. The I-Thou knowing is ““seeing the other”” or “making present the person of the other” (Friedman, 1976, p. 168 & 171). In part, this different way of knowing that Buber presents opposes Dewey’s scientific method, because, according to Buber, the scientific method “is not qualified to find the wholeness of man” (Friedman, 1976, p. 173). On Buber’s account, knowing is not a matter of rejecting subject-object relations, nor rejecting the scientific method, but it is starting with I-Thou, then allowing that way of knowing to shape other ways of knowing so that the wholeness of man may be found and from this stem other ways of knowing. This discussion will be expanded in Chapter Five, in the synthesis when I consider incommensurabilities between Dewey and Buber.

### **Buber and Standpoint Epistemology: An Objection to Inclusion**

Exploring standpoint epistemology helps address the most pressing objection I sense in Buber's work, that being his idea of inclusion. Buber believes that for an I-Thou encounter to occur one must be able to know the standpoint of another. He terms this knowing 'inclusion'. Whether this is possible will be discussed after this brief analysis of standpoint epistemology.

A standpoint epistemologist agrees that knowledge is partial, embodied and local, but argues, based on Marxist theory, that there is more to that partial, embodied and local knowledge (Harding, 1986). Standpoint epistemologies regard what I experience because of how I have struggled to be more than I have been taken to be. Two key elements of standpoint epistemologies (referred to in the plural because there are many specific standpoints from which epistemology may come from such as African American women or lesbian) are the necessity of struggle and the idea of epistemic privilege. A standpoint is achieved, which is to say that it comes from more than identity and place. A standpoint comes from the experience of struggle. As Hartstock says,

The vision available to the oppressed group must be struggled for and represents an achievement which requires both science to see beneath the surface of social relations in which all are forced to participate, and the education **which can only come from struggle to change these relations**. (1983, p. 285)

When you have experienced struggle for, or against, something, then you come to understand that thing and are able to form a standpoint. For instance, Canadian female federal judges had to struggle to be given more than two months off for maternity leave, unlike women in other places of employment who are granted a year, as little as twelve years ago because prior to that time there were few female judges, and even fewer having children while on the bench. "Some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them

and to work out ways of doing something about it” (Foley in Fenwick, 2001, p. 41). A standpoint may be achieved from this struggle to have a basic need met. As stated by Alcoff and Potter:

Women’s lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy, a vantage point which can ground a powerful critique of the phallogratic institutions and ideology which constitute the capitalist form of patriarchy. (1993, p. 85)

Women’s work has often been to care for bodies and for the places bodies reside, and as such, women have epistemic privilege in that they have a distinct knowledge based on their experience to offer because of their marginalized, oppressed position in society.

There is the sense, in standpoint epistemology, that experience is understood to be the partial, local, and embodied living and struggle of life. The work that must be done, as a feminist, as Ford and Haraway (in quotation marks) state, to,

“live in [the world] well,” to live in “critical reflexive relation to our own and others’ practices of domination” and to live cognizant of the “unequal parts of privilege and oppression that make up all positions.” (p. 180)

Part of living well is in working for understanding of one another’s experiences, being prepared for what the voices we invite to the table might say regarding their own experience and in holding foremost the *telos* of justice and liberty for all. This is why I do not take lightly Buber saying that we must live the event through the other’s standpoint.

Though I do not believe Buber’s use of standpoint is identical to the feminist development of the term because the work described above on standpoint epistemology comes much later, I do believe there is adequate similarity for considering the implications of what Buber is saying through the lens of standpoint epistemology. Given that standpoint epistemology rests on both struggle for one’s standpoint and epistemic privilege of that standpoint, it would seem that Buber’s suggestion that living through an

experience through another's standpoint is necessary for an I-thou encounter may be problematic. Buber would point to both will and grace, as mentioned, as the means to overcoming this seemingly impossible obstacle. By will he means a present readiness to meet and know the other. By grace he means being received by the other in a way that cannot be forced or coerced into occurring, but nonetheless does occur on occasion. I find, for the developing notion of educative encounter, that this is insufficient. Rather than knowing the other's standpoint from an inside perspective, as in experiencing their standpoint firsthand, I support a more moderate version of Buber's inclusion. It is sufficient for educative encounter, if not for I-Thou encounter, to recognize that the other may have a standpoint and to make sufficient effort to understand the other's standpoint. In part this is sufficient because it is defensible while Buber's position is indefensible. While we can claim to know the other's standpoint from an inside perspective, how is this actually verifiable? Recognizing that the other may have a standpoint and putting forth effort to understand this standpoint is both attainable and verifiable. This recognition is sufficient for educative encounter because we do not have to be able to walk in another's shoes to educatively encounter the other, rather we must be able to distinguish this other as an 'other' subject.

### **Summary of Buber**

Buber has laid out a vision of encounter that sets encounter as a necessary precursor of education and as a partner in education. Not only that, he has also positioned I-Thou encounter, which is one subject meeting another subject, as the foundation for I-It encounter, where one subject meets an object. He insists these two ways of interacting with the world must work in alternation. For I-Thou encounter to be given opportunity to



occur, mutuality and trust as well as dialogue must happen in a manner that is open.

These conditions will carry over as conditions for educative encounter as well.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PHILOSOPHERS OF ENCOUNTER – NODDINGS**

Noddings' work on care theory focuses on a caring encounter. Noddings is one of the originators and remains the most prevalent author of care-related theory. To understand care theory and what it has to do with educative encounter, I first outline the basics of this theory, including characteristics of care and relational ontology as central to care theory. The aims of an ethic of care and care in the classroom are both considered. One cannot speak of Noddings' care theory without addressing her ethics of care. Part of the discussion of her ethics of care in this analysis includes attention to its implications for moral education because it is in her moral framework that educative encounters are built. Both the accolades and the objections regarding care theory will be considered along with answers given to the criticisms by various authors, including Noddings herself. This is possible, in part, because Noddings' care theory, first published in 1984, has had a very clear line of objections and responses. Following the dialogue between Noddings and her detractors is an opportunity for a robust understanding of Noddings' work and helps inform the conception of encounter that I am building. My analysis of Noddings, which includes the objections and responses, differs from my analysis of Dewey and Buber because neither Dewey nor Buber has had such a singular focus in their writings as has Noddings.

The moral framework Noddings offers in her care theory is what I wish to use for this novel conception of educative encounter. I am convinced by Noddings' work that education is a moral endeavor and that what and how we learn should be centered on care

as she conceptualized it. Her work on caring in schools has been twofold; she addresses how curriculum organized around centers of care can better help students learn traditional subjects such as mathematics and English literature and she addresses how care may be learned by student from educators that incorporate modeling, dialogue, confirmation and practice of care in the classroom. I want to explore another dimension of caring that I believe educative encounter will encapsulate; the dimension of care as a pedagogical framework to guide learning in a relational manner. In part, I see this developing dimension as filling a gap in Noddings' work. The manner in which she developed curricular centers of care presupposes a caring relationship between educator and student, but a lesson centered on care as a topic may take place in the absence of a caring relationship. Conversely, caring relationships may exist between educator and student without learning beyond learning to care occurring. My focus is on encounters, as the relational aspect of experience, being educative; in other words, how caring relations are the source and impetus for learning disciplinary content. To develop this dimension, Noddings' work is an indispensable foundation, and so it is to analyzing her work that I next draw attention.

### **Noddings**

Noddings was born in 1929 (Reed & Johnson, 2007). She taught math in elementary and high school for many years before pursuing her PhD (Reed & Johnson, 2007). Her academic contributions are in the realm of philosophy of education, predominately in the areas of care theory and ethics of care. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she is known as a mother, having raised ten children (Reed & Johnson, 2007).

Her academic writing, beginning in the 1980s, stemmed from similar feminist roots as the psychological/empirical work of Carol Gilligan (1993) who focused on the moral development of women. When Noddings' book "*Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*" was published, some philosophers, such as Ann Diller (1996a), sensed that a distinctive and radical approach to ethics and moral education had been offered and welcomed this offering. Others, such as Alison Jaggar (1995), Scott Fletcher (2000) and Audrey Thompson (2003), saw the same revolutionary potential in Noddings' care theory and responded with cautions and concerns, recognizing that their objections pointed to dangers associated with this ethics of care. Noddings provides not only an argument for caring and teaching care in schools, but also an ethic that revolutionizes moral education.

### **Care Theory**

Care is a foundation of the developing notion of educative encounter. While care might seem like a fairly intuitive notion, Noddings offers this dissertation a rich conceptualization of care that is different from the way in which it is commonly conceived. According to Noddings (2002b), in order for an encounter to be caring, three conditions must be met. To take a simple schematic account, when we say A cares for B, on Noddings account we mean: "A cares for B – that is, A's consciousness is characterized by attention and motivational displacement, and A performs some act in accordance with [care], and B recognizes that A cares for B" (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 19). In this definition, caring is characterized by the consciousness and action of A and reception by B. The caring action is broadly conceived; "caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 17). This directly

influences the developing notion of educative encounter, for it is not what is done that is the focus of care theory and for educative encounter (though of course this matters), rather the focus is on how to best be in relation with others. The one-caring must be consistently present, which Noddings identifies as attentive love (2002b). The purpose of the caring relation is to promote more caring relationships, in part by helping the other flourish by preventing harm and meeting the needs of the other. This briefly characterizes the caring encounter; and it requires further elaboration.

### **Characteristics of Care**

Besides attentive love, three other characteristics of care that specifically relate to and define a caring encounter are engrossment, motivational displacement, and reciprocity. Engrossment defines the ways in which a person providing care is present and ready to intently listen to the cared-for's needs (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 17); it involves a bracketing of oneself so that one can receive the other. Being present for another in this way is a form of empathy and requires labor. The one-caring, in receiving the other, recognizes the actual needs of the cared-for and not just assumes or project her ideas onto the needs of the cared-for. Caring for another, in addition to engrossment, also involves what Noddings calls motivational displacement, which she describes as directing one's motivational energy to the service of the cared-for, toward the needs and goals of the cared-for, or their projects. Finally, importantly, it must be recognized that the cared-for also has a role in the caring relation, a role which involves the "recognition or realization of care" (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 18), which does not necessarily mean an equal give and take of attention and caring. Termed reciprocity, this response involves demonstrating or indicating in some way, not only by verbal means, that the caring has

been received. For example, a preschooler may exhibit reciprocity by simply wiping her tears away and resuming play with the other children after a scraped knee is washed and bandaged. In this example, the one-caring has received feedback that the care is effective and has been received, even though the experience of being cared for was not expressed in words. Teaching is rewarding, often due to signs of reciprocity, such as a thank you note at the end of a semester, watching a student grab hold of an idea and run with it in positive ways, or seeing a student struggle and break through with a difficult concept. At the heart of Noddings' (2002b) care theory are these caring encounters. According to the ethic of care, the prime commitment is to the maintenance and enhancement of caring relationships with others. For educative encounter, this is also the prime commitment, closely followed by the purpose of learning. These relationships to be maintained and enhanced are "the face-to-face occasions in which one person, as carer, cares directly for another, the cared for" (N. Noddings, 2002b, pp. 21-22). These face-to-face occasions are the heart of educative encounter as well as caring encounter, though the differentiating factor between the two is the educative component in educative encounter. One may learn from caring encounters, but this is not an integral part of care theory. Caring encounters, though different from educative encounters, are necessary for educative encounters to occur. While a caring encounter may occur with no learning taking place, and a learning encounter may occur with no caring taking place, what I am defining as educative encounter requires both caring and learning to coincide. To further understand care theory and to understand the difference between it and educative encounter, Noddings' views on self are explored.

### **Self and Relational Ontology**

Noddings develops her ethic on the basis of a relational ontology, the perspective of self as always a self-in-relation. Some would define the self as an entity independent of surroundings, largely “characterized by autonomy, equality, rationality, and unity” (N. Noddings, 2002b, pp. 91-92). Noddings, however, contends that we are relational beings who construct meaning out of our encounters with other people, objects, and environments and are defined by them. Noddings takes the clear perspective that we are not our true selves if stripped of all our relations, experiences, and obligations; rather, she claims these constitute our identity. As Noddings (2002b) states, “[T]he self I build in encounters with others is as nearly a true self as we can find” (p. 210). It is through “encounters with other selves” (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 207) that we grow, learn about care, and care for particular others. Each of us is dependent on the responses of those with whom we engage and thus we cannot separate ourselves, or our development, completely from other people. Noddings (2002b) takes this a step further, saying that we are not just interdependent, but morally interdependent: our moral beliefs and actions are connected to those around us and “how good I can be depends at least in part on how you treat me” (p. 210). Dewey would agree with these notions about how radically embedded we are in social networks and that these have strong implications for our moral lives.

While most of the account I have given so far of Noddings views of self are as self-in-relation through encounter with other human beings or other external items, Noddings also recognizes that one can encounter one’s self. Like Dewey, Noddings views the self as developing rather than ready-made, and states, regarding this that the “self can be reflexive – it can encounter itself and pose questions for itself” (N.

Noddings, 2002b, p. 94). Perhaps it can do so because of the largeness of self, or as Walt Whitman says,

Do I contradict myself?  
Very well then I contradict myself;  
I am large, I contain multitudes. (in N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 113)

In part, the self (that contains multitudes) begins when an organism “encounters people, objects, its own parts, and so on” (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 98), developing a self through reactions to encounters. Again, I find a definition of self that allows for educative encounter with self. These encounters that form selves are of a certain kind, not merely casual brushings up against in the grocery store, but encounters with an ‘other’ that affect the self, are meaningful, involve language and are evaluated by means of feeling and cognition (N. Noddings, 2002b). Though Noddings acknowledges “how complex and difficult the search for a self really is” (2002b, p. 103), she is convinced that “if we are interested in the development of caring persons, we need to know about the particular encounters that support or undermine caring” (2002b, p. 102). I would add, therefore, that we need to know about educative encounter. In part, she answers that there is something to relating to an adult that is both honest and loving that aids in the developing of a self that is capable of honesty and love. Essentially, “encounter is clearly paramount in the construction of self” (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 109). This developing self fits into Noddings’ aims of care.

### **Aims of Care**



A way to characterize the caring relation is to point out that a basic aim of caring encounters are “cultivating the ability to respond appropriately” (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 166) to those for whom we attempt to care. As one increasingly becomes capable of receptive attention, motivational displacement, and reciprocity as a means for taking caring action on behalf of another person and receiving care one develops the capacity to respond, the capacity for response-ability. As Noddings (2003a) states, response-ability is “a capacity neither essential nor innate but learned and developed in actual life with other beings” (p. 41). It is through our educational engagement with other people that we can increase our ability to respond adequately to the needs of others. To engage with other people in educational settings will require an understanding of what it means to meet, or encounter, others in a way that is educative, both for the tasks at hand and for the tasks of fostering know-how in regards to encountering and learning from encountering. It is to such learning that we turn our attention to, considering care in the classroom.

### **Care in the Classroom**

In the classroom, Noddings envisions care being enacted by the educator as one-caring and being taught to students so that they may learn both to give and receive care. Though the educator is primarily the one-caring, as the educator-student relationship is one of “many relations [that] are unequal by their very nature” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 91), this does not mean that students are not to be the ones-caring. Noddings suggests teaching a student to be the one-caring and the cared-for through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation (2003a). Obviously as an educator one must be aware of the numerous eyes watching every move and word, but modeling as Noddings envisions is this awareness and even more; it is the acknowledgement that in every caring encounter

the educator is not only meeting the other but sharing with that other how to care. “An educator cannot ‘talk’ this ethic. She must live it” (N. Noddings, 2003a, p. 179). In short the educator models caring by caring for her students. It is not just up to her to establish caring relations with her students, but to teach them to establish caring relations as well. This process must be mirrored in educative encounter, in that an educator must have educative encounters with her students, but also teach them to have educative encounters.

When it comes to dialogue, Noddings has three intents and purposes for it. The first is that dialogue be used to build and maintain caring relations and involves “a common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 23). Addressing students in general and each student particularly, we must do so in a manner that lets them know they matter – relating to Buber’s commitment to developing trust in the world in students. The second purpose concerns the content of the dialogue. Noddings says that educators must be willing to discuss existential matters, such as grief, happiness, God, life, religion, hope because it helps prepare students for the confounding, difficult as well as the rapturous parts of life, even, perhaps helping them live happily. Finally, dialogue combats ignorance and, potentially, moral errors. “Dialogue serves not only to inform the decision under consideration; it also contributes to a habit of mind – that of seeking adequate information on which to make decisions” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 23). In addition to decision making, dialogue also helps students learn interpersonal reasoning, that is, “the capacity to communicate, share decision making, arrive at compromises, and support each other in solving everyday problems” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 53).

To practice caring means presenting students opportunities to be apprenticed in caring. Such opportunities could include caring for a classroom pet, growing a garden

together, visiting a long term care facility, serving at a soup kitchen and older students tutoring students in younger grades. All of these provide skills, but most importantly, the opportunity to practice care. In practicing care, educative encounters may be fostered.

Confirmation means attribution of the best motive consonant with reality for a student's action. Homework not done? Rather than guessing the student was goofing off confirmation means trying to imagine the best realistic motive the student might have. In doing so, "we confirm him; that is, we reveal to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts" (N. Noddings, 2003a, p. 193). This does not mean we do not address the wrong and attempt to correct, but we do so out of a spirit of care and confirmation<sup>2</sup>.

### **Moral Education**

Noddings believes that a primary aim of education is moral education, of which character development is a means. As Noddings says, "character education – the deliberate attempt to inculcate virtues – is the oldest and best-known mode of moral education" (p.157). Noddings has a different approach to character education, however, suggesting that rather than label individuals as virtuous, "the label virtuous is better attached to the relational interaction" (p. 161). Thus, she contrasts her ethics of care approach to moral education to that of virtue ethics. Noddings points out that taking the individual as virtuous is a false unit of analysis because there are no virtues outside of relations. If I am not the one-caring, I do not have the virtue of care. Virtues play out in relation. I am not a caring person separate from my caring encounters. In education, as in life, there is the necessity for people to get along, share resources, be concerned with the

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<sup>2</sup> This section on care theory was drawn from an article written in collaboration with Jamie Burke and Alison Rheingold titled: "Bringing Relations to the Center: Care Theory and Outdoor Experiential Education."

welfare of others and consider actions contextually. This can lead us to the conclusion that moral education should focus on learning to have good relations rather than being a good person, which is where the focus of educative encounters lays – on the quality of relations for the purposes of learning.

### **Ethics of Care**

An ethic based on a caring relation is an ethic that puts that relation and the needs of the other at the center of any moral decision making. A caring relationship is one in which both members of the relationship are aware of the care-giving and receiving. We are utterly dependent on one another; we are our relations and encounters. Though much like situationist ethics in that the answer to “what do I do?” is “it depends,” the most important part of the focus is always on the person, though attention is paid to the context. Justification of our actions is not the point according to Noddings; the point is how we meet the other. A caring occasion is “a moment in which each must decide how to meet the other and what to do with the moment” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 24), and the answer to these questions of ‘how to meet’ and ‘what to do’ are to be responsive to the other and treat the other with attitudes and actions of care. From this, an educative encounter is conceivable. We can see, then, that educative encounter is rooted in an ethic of care as its moral framework.

### **Central Objections to Ethics of Care**

Ethics of care as an ethical framework is not without obstacles and objections. As was noted in the introduction to this analysis of Noddings, some consider this ethic dangerous. By exploring some central objections to the ethic, I hope to present care theory in a realistic light, one that offers the best of this framework without suggesting

that it is the perfect pinnacle of all moral frameworks. I carefully defend ethics of care against these central objections because it is the moral framework for educative encounters as well. Following is a discussion of six objections that typify the main types of objections found regarding care theory, which I characterize as (1) the proximity objection, (2) the justice versus care objection (3) the ‘what if’ objection, (4) the self-sacrificing objection, (5) the paradox of care and criticism, (6) and the gender objection. I indicate in each case how I think Noddings would respond or has responded to each objection, and in some cases offer my own responses as well.

**Proximity Objection.** Caring encounters, the face-to-face, personal interactions that consist of the one-caring and the cared-for, are paradigmatic for care theory, and, as we will see, for educative encounters. Buber’s dialogic relation is in alignment with Noddings’ proximity condition; little surprise as Noddings explicitly uses Buber’s work in her development of care theory. Many have asked what is lost in defining caring so narrowly in that caring-for only happens in close proximity. This proximal closeness required to care-for someone is troubling to Fletcher (2000), who asks if “caring as a moral theory gives us a way of overcoming the ‘distance’ involved that is effective in helping us understand the causes of this suffering and the reasons we have for taking action in response to it?” (p. 108). Jaggar (1995) also argues that the attention that caring as a moral perspective brings to particulars, i.e., “the needs of others in their concrete specificity” (p. 180), can cause us to lose sight of the bigger picture, such as issues of social justice. The emphasis in care theory to care for those close at hand is not, however, to the exclusion of the big picture, but rather a necessary precursor. Noddings (1992) argues that, ideally, in striving to care-*for* people, we will meet needs at hand and learn to

care *about* people in the bigger picture. An example of this distinction between caring about and caring for would be the proximal difference between “I care about people, so I’ll send money to starving children in Africa” and “I am caring-for the hungry in my community by bringing food to my local soup kitchen as well as serving meals there.” Noddings would say, as previously mentioned, that as we learn response-ability to those close at hand, potential for wider influence increases. Caring at a distance holds the challenge of knowing if care is received because we are not present to those we are caring-for and holds the potential to “cause suffering to those we hold responsible for the pain we try to alleviate” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 113). While caring at a distance is difficult, this does not mean that “we are not obligated to do *anything* (1992, p. 110, emphasis in original). Caring about is dependent on caring-for, thus, rather than being hampered in our caring by our hyper focus, we are enabled to care about by our caring-for. Attending to the personal, the particular, is where we begin to care, but not where caring ends.

**Justice vs. Care Objection.** Closely related to concerns of particularity, or caring-for as a priority over caring about, are concerns that care theory neglect, or even reject, issues of justice. Fletcher (2000) raises the concern that care theory, in its proximal relatedness, does little to support concerns with systematic oppression, racism and sexism, rendering care theory morally admirable and politically powerless. Fletcher’s own response to his concern is that care theory, on its own, is valuable but insufficient to respond to instances of injustice, though he does point out that what care theory most contributes is authenticity, or “a commitment to self-reflection and exploration consistent

with the view that identity is constructed rather than given, and that this process of construction takes place in a complex landscape of historical contingency” (p. 120).

Others, such as Chamberlain and Houston, see justice and care as perhaps two sides of the same coin and view care as indispensable to justice. They discuss this issue of justice and caring as complementary in their chapter on “*School Sexual Harassment Policies: The Need for Both Justice and Care*,” citing many examples of the insufficiency of justice alone as an approach to addressing and attempting to correct peer to peer sexual harassment in middle schools (Chamberlain & Houston, 1999). Four reasons that they give for the limits of a justice approach are: (1) that policies are often in place to avoid liability rather than help the harassed; (2) there is incongruence between what is identified as harassment in the policies and what students are willing and supported to recognize as harassment; (3) many policies rest on the ill-conceived assumption based on an idea of equality that those harassed will and are able to enact the policies meant to protect them; and finally; (4) in contrast to the highly social nature of middle school, policies leave no room for reconciliation if the policies are enacted. Ethics of care, with relations at the center, opens the door to step into some of these glaring gaps in school policies on sexual harassment. From a care perspective, greater attention would be paid “to the particularities of the persons and situations for which school sexual harassment policies are designed” (Chamberlain & Houston, 1999, p. 159). We might also come to understand why students may be reluctant to enact the policies, affording “us a way to begin the work of reconciliation among the students, when appropriate” (Chamberlain & Houston, 1999, p. 160). The authors argue that the point of policy is not that it be articulated, but that it be “performed” (Chamberlain & Houston, 1999, p. 163). To

support students and the performance of policies “the values of both care and justice are required” (Chamberlain & Houston, 1999, p. 163). This argument in regards to school policies may be extended to other public policies and issues of justice.

Clearly care theory has something to contribute to issues of justice, as Fletcher claims, and is even shown by Chamberlain and Houston to be complementary to justice, but is this what Noddings intends? I believe care theory was not meant to contribute or compliment, though it may helpfully do both and although both are laudable ends. These answers, of contribution or complementation to justice, require justice for caring relationships to occur while I would argue that Noddings’ conclusion in *Starting at Home* (2002b) is that caring relationships are needed for justice to occur. Rather than the private supporting the public, given that justice often arises in a public arena and influences what takes place in home, care theory is a radical re-visioning of how justice should arise; that from the private the public should be built. “Caring relations should form the wider moral framework into which justice should be fitted” (Held, 2006, p. 71). We cannot have justice without caring about, in the sense of caring about when someone, including ourselves, is treated poorly. Caring about is dependent on caring for; we cannot learn to care about others and the injustice they experience if we do not care for those we encounter with needs we can meet in our day to day life. An ethic of care does not exclude issues of justice, or merely act as a compliment or contribution to them, rather, according to Noddings it is what justice should be built upon. Framed in such a way, it will take justice even further. As Noddings says, for example, “we are forbidden by law to harm one another, but we are not legally obligated to help someone who is in danger” (2002, p. 34). Virginia Held has done some careful work to reframe justice and reminds



us that morality is a first person matter, not a third person list of rules and judgments (2006). This idea of morality as a first person matter fits well with educative encounter, which also starts with caring and must be a first person matter. Though we must learn to care, we do not learn and then care, we learn through caring.

**“What if” Objection.** What if, as Davion (1993) asks, the cared-for holds nefarious goals or knowingly commits a wrong act, such as theft or murder? Does this not “involve... significant moral risk” (p. 162) for the one-caring because of the potential of being corrupted by the one cared-for? If the one in need of care has ill intent or is morally corrupt, then the one-caring possibly places one’s self in a compromising position. How does the one-caring respond according to the needs the other presents? There are a couple of ways in which Noddings would suggest responding. In responding, we must remember “we have a primary obligation to promote our friends’ moral growth” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 99). This means addressing the wrong or ill intent by appropriate means as well as continuing to uphold and help the other while they face their wrongdoing or ill intent. Another, though least desirable means of responding, is coercion. Noddings (2002b) points out that trust in another is trust that the one-caring will always act in the other’s best interest, and that there are times when the one-caring will need to infer needs. As ones cared-for, we do sometimes misunderstand what is in our own best interest however this does not make way for merely paternalistic action. If coercion or other means must be used to prevent harm, the aim of shifting more control to the one who is more dependent must not be lost. The point of a caring relationship is not, as Davion fears, to do whatever the cared-for wants us to do as ones-caring; the point is to help the cared-for flourish according to the cared-for’s view of flourishing within the context of community.

A similar concern arises for educative encounter regarding what encounters we should avoid, which will be addressed in Chapter Six.

**Self-sacrifice Objection.** Houston (1990) raises the question: Can an ethic of care avoid self-sacrifice? Might care theory exacerbate the problem? Although Noddings and others advise the one-caring to also care for one's self, this is not a prominent aspect of care theory. There is an inherent focus on the cared-for in caring encounters as delineated by Noddings, however, Noddings does claim that this focus on the cared-for need not take away from, nor conflict with the one-caring's interests. Self-sacrificing for another in the name of care could actually prove counter-productive to goals of caring such as promoting the cared-for's ideal caring self. The question needs to be asked regarding whom, besides one's own self, is caring for the one-caring? "If we do not look for patterns [of culture] we might not notice the absence of women being cared-for, that it is not seen as anyone's particular responsibility to care for women" (Houston & Diller, 1987, p. 11).<sup>3</sup> Not every caring relationship must be mutual, but rather someone must be caring-for the one-caring. As Houston and Diller point out, this can be an issue regarding the care of women. There need to be others caring for the ones-caring, but the ones-caring also need to be able to care for themselves. In this area, I think educative encounters helps strengthen care theory, for encountering self is as significant a sphere of relation as encountering others and the world. In learning to encounter self and from encountering self, a person is better able to encounter others and learn from encountering others. In care theory, much of the focus is on the other as the cared-for. In educative

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<sup>3</sup> This is part of Fletcher's and Jaggar's point, however, caring-for does not equate with turning a blind eye to the bigger picture of societal norms that need to be questioned.

encounter, self is an 'other' that also needs to be met and cared-for with explicate implications that take care theory and caring for one's self a bit further.

This issue of self-sacrifice can be also particularly challenging in the arena of education, where the educator is identifiably and unarguably the one-caring, with responsibility to be present and available to care for numerous students on a daily basis. Many educators express dismay over the expectation that they care, in Noddings' definition of care, for a classroom full (and sometimes overflowing) with students. Current school environments do make care challenging. Noddings does say that educators "do not need to establish a deep, lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student" but rather "be totally and nonselectively present to the student – to each student" (2003a, p. 180). This does not entirely rescue Noddings from Houston and Diller's criticism. As stated in Chapter One, this dissertation focuses on the educator/student relation, and while recognizing that there are systemic issues that make what I, and in this case Noddings, are advocating for difficult, there is still merit in examining care and encounter in education. How educators are supported and cared-for in their work is a crucial matter that needs to be addressed, for if educators are not cared-for while they are the ones-caring, what they do is personally unsustainable.

Attention must also be given to how, in the name of caring, the one-caring may stay in harmful relationships. Limited reasons are given for the one-caring to *not* enter into a caring relationship with a particular other. In fact, it can be challenging to justify terminating or not entering into a potential caring encounter. Houston (1990) states two possible means within care theory for such action: if the caring encounter would interfere with previously existing caring relationships or if personal harm, physically, emotionally,

or ethically, would come to the one-caring. Noddings adds to this in pointing out that in equal relations, such as friendship, occasions of caring are present and demands are made of both people to respond accordingly. If this is not the case, “quitting such a relation is not ‘breaking friendship’ because, in actuality, there is no friendship without mutual acceptance of the main criterion” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 99) that both be able and willing to give and receive care on different occasions.

**Paradox of Care and Criticism Objection.** Many perceive a tension between challenging a student and caring for a student. Caring, however, is not synonymous with spoiling or indulging. As Noddings (2002a) states, “There is nothing mushy about caring. It is the strong, resilient backbone of human life” (p. 101). To care for students involves having high expectations for students. To care is to “expect, demand, require, and teach adherence to certain standards of behavior for the sakes of both the child and the community” (Diller, 1996b, p. 134). While doing so, however, we must not place precedence on the tasks over the relational aspects of learning. Caring in this way creates both a community of support and of inquiry, a key in developing the potential for educative encounters to occur in the classroom.

Typically, caring encounters seem to support educative encounters. As addressed above, caring does not mean an absence of challenge. The contrast and comparison still must be made between an educative encounter and a caring encounter. Education may take place regardless of whether caring relations are in place. Learning is not inherent in caring encounters, at least not as Noddings has delineated caring encounters. This is of interest to me, as an educator. I wish to identify, in Chapter Five, what in caring

encounters may foster educative encounters to build a notion of educative encounter that attends to Noddings identified aims of producing caring people through schooling.

**Gender Objection.** Held identifies the concern that care theory does not prioritize equality and that it may not question oppressive systems within which caring occurs, but even worse, may draw attention away from such systems (2006). I, however, do not think that care theory fails to prioritize equality; rather, care theory addresses the issue of equality in a different manner. Say in a marriage there is an imbalance in commitment and contribution of the two spouses. One way to address it is to fight for equality, as has been a large piece of the work of feminists, aiming for a 50/50 split in value, recognition and contribution. Noddings' vision for care is much more radical than making sure everyone is doing their part, has a part, and is thanked for their part. Care theory invites us all to go above and beyond. I can see how this may be a source of concern because typically, in the realm of care giving in homes, women have given way more of themselves than men. Thompson also has concerns about the issue of keeping women's work just that, women's work. Noddings, though starting with women and the feminine, does not remain there. Care theory is meant for all, men and women alike. If I am envisioning care theory correctly, I am in agreement that the remedy to inequality is not to have women care less and men care more, making things equal. The remedy is for all to be caring as conceptualized by Noddings. Efforts for equality have often, perhaps even subconsciously, been efforts to help women be more like men (N. Noddings, 2002b). While the ideal human came to be identified as man millennia ago, I, along with Noddings, suggest that efforts to promote equality must also go towards fostering conditions and support for men to be more caring and that the ideal human must be

reconceptualized with consideration not only for the public life, but private too, addressing issues of equality through teaching caring and fostering conditions for all to care. "Practice in caring should transform schools and, eventually, the society in which we live" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 25).

In Noddings' work, the question as to why women do what they do is not asked. Fletcher states that "a more careful and specific defense of the particular norms and practices associated with women in our society" (Fletcher, 2000, p. 106) is needed. In upholding caring, what are we inadvertently upholding? For one, it would seem unexamined expectations: "Both men and women expect women to be more empathic and altruistic, to display concern for the welfare of others, to be caring and nurturant and, to a lesser extent, to be interpersonally sensitive, emotionally expressive, and gentle in personal style" (Jaggar, 1995, p. 184). Does care help maintain "sexism, racism, heterosexism, class hierarchies, and other forms of inequity" (Thompson, 2003, p. 217)? It would seem that care theory works within the system, but the system is not innocent. However, many critics, including Thompson, presuppose or assume, by their very efforts to show otherwise, that care theory is meant to be, or should be, emancipatory, trying to fit care against other perspectives (in this case, socialization, structural and deconstructive) only to find it lacking. But what is the real purpose of care theory and does it not meet this purpose? To me, it seems as though care theory does a very specific thing, which is to build and maintain relations through caring encounters as modeled in ideal mother/child relationships and ideal homes. From this very specific thing, much is accomplished in school and life for individuals. This, of course, does not mean that care accomplishes all that needs to be accomplished, nor rights every wrong, but I think

Noddings would say that it is an organic, ground up (or home out) approach that has a positive effect. Like care theory, educative encounter is not an explicitly emancipatory theory, but that does not mean that it has no bearing on emancipatory issues.

### **Summary of Noddings**

An ethic based on care is one that puts relation and the needs of the other at the center of any moral decision-making. A caring relationship is one in which both members of the relationship are sometimes, but not always, aware of their roles, whether as the one-caring or the one cared-for. There is a fulsome recognition that we are dependent on one another; we are our relations. The purpose of the caring relation is to promote growth, prevent harm, and meet the needs of the other. I have to agree with Diller (1996a) in that this indeed is a very promising educator's ethic. Educators care, of that there is typically no doubt, except, as is crucial, from students' perspectives. Noddings has offered a clear conception of care to help bridge the gap between our intent to care and how our caring is received. Noddings has made clear that the classroom should be a place for care so that students may flourish. Care theory is meant to influence both the means and the purpose of education. Given that one of the main purposes of developing this notion of educative encounter is to promote growth in individual's ability to care in accordance with Noddings' conception of care, her contribution is central to this dissertation.

A main part of this section on Noddings has been explicating and responding to objections to care theory, many of which could be raised about educative encounter. Are the objections raised devastating to Noddings' notion of care theory? I think not. Addressing the criticisms helps to understand a more complete picture of care, albeit one in which not all issues are addressed, and helps to consider anticipated objections of

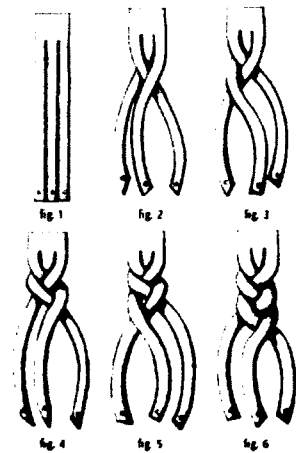
educative encounter. Care theory is not meant to be a totalizing theory, encompassing all aspects of morality or education. And, as Dewey has said, “better it is for philosophy to err in active participation in the living struggles and issues of its own age and times than to maintain an immune monastic impeccability, without relevancy and bearing in the generating ideas of its contemporary present” (in McDermott, 1981, p. 222). If Noddings has erred, it has certainly not been in irrelevancy. Her work has generated much response, both theoretically and practically. The task ahead is to relate Noddings’ conception of a caring encounter with a conception of educative encounter. I do this in the synthesis section that follows in Chapter Five.



## CHAPTER V

### PHILOSOPHERS OF ENCOUNTER – SYNTHESIS

In this chapter, I endeavor to form a cord or braid of three strands, the works of Dewey, Noddings and Buber, to offer a more philosophically rich notion of encounter. In chapters two, three and four, I laid out their three separate strands of thought regarding encounter. In regard to Dewey, the analysis focused on his idea of experience. The heart of the Buber analysis lay in our considering his account of I-Thou encounters. The analysis of Noddings' work differed, offering less of an overview, but rather a focused exploration of care theory and ethics of care, including objections and responses. With these analyses, we are set to synthesize the contributions of Dewey and Noddings with those of Buber. Moving forward, in this section I articulate a synthesis of their ideas; essentially, braiding together the strands I have laid out in the previous three chapters in order to build this notion of educative encounter. This notion is for the purpose of directing experience to the needs of the person for growth and specifically cultivating the ability of the individual in experiencing and relating through new classroom pedagogies for higher education classrooms. The point of this synthesis is to demonstrate that all three philosophers have something to contribute to the notion of encounter I am building, but that no one philosopher in isolation from the others offers enough to sustain the concept. Putting their ideas together enables me to offer a notion of



encounter that will make possible pedagogical approaches in higher education oriented towards learning through caring encounters.

In placing the ideas of Dewey, Buber and Noddings together I am not performing a marriage, where the two (or in this case, the three) become one. There are incommensurabilities amongst the three that would render such a move impossible without sacrificing the integrity of the intent of each philosopher. I acknowledge what is incommensurable between each pair of philosophers in the following section, though their commonalities more than overcome their differences. Discussing the incommensurable aspects serves as more than an acknowledgement of differences between Dewey, Noddings and Buber; it serves as an opportunity for developing my notion of encounter. Rather than the metaphor of marriage, picturing a braid allows for consideration of how each strand, or each philosopher's work, can be interwoven in a side-by-side manner. I do this braiding first by identifying the commensurabilities and incommensurabilities amongst Dewey, Noddings and Buber. I wrap up the synthesis by accentuating the ways in which each of these three philosophers, all concerned with experiential and relational ways of being and knowing in the world, offer unique contributions which are insufficient in isolation of one another, but complete when considered together in providing a valuable conceptual tool for making sense of the nature of encounter in education. I aim to depict the relationship among the works of Dewey, Noddings and Buber by highlighting mutually reinforcing and complementary approaches that support the coming conversation on the nature of educative encounters (Fletcher, 2000). The beginnings of this conversation, where I lay out my definition of

educative encounter, conclude this chapter. This will include considering the specifics of encounter, in relation to self, others and the world.

### **Dewey and Noddings**

The commonalities between Dewey and Noddings appear to be fairly extensive, and Noddings herself acknowledges her debt to Dewey in her work. As one example, she believes caring will be learnt in the classroom through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. All of these modes fit well with Dewey's perspective on how we should learn anything, especially the emphasis on practice. Noddings' idea of an apprenticeship in care points to learning occurring through participation. Dewey was convinced that learning must first be active before passive; an apprenticeship can accomplish just this order. An apprenticeship, or practice, for learning also lends itself well to schooling connected to "methods of living and learning" (Dewey, 1981, p. 459).

Both Noddings and Dewey place great emphasis on the learner. For both, education must begin with attention to the students that are learning, their interests and their needs. As Noddings states, "genuine education must engage the energies and purposes of those being educated" (Noddings, 1995, p. 196). Additionally, both are firm in their belief that focusing on the learner is only the beginning, rather than everything needed for education. Dewey and Nodings criticize child-centered education. Both believe that being child-centered is not enough, rather only one essential part of the equation of education. While both account for the student first, Dewey weighs interaction with the environment more heavily than does Noddings, for example, in emphasizing the enviroining conditions surrounding the person. In *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922) Dewey says that how a person conducts himself results from the interaction of this person

and their social and natural environment. He goes on to say that there are forces both within a person and without, stating, however, that the internal forces “are infinitely frail in comparison with exterior forces” (1922, p. 11). Further emphasizing the importance of the environment, Dewey says that “freedom is found in that kind of interaction which maintains an environment in which human desire and choice count for something” (1922, p. 11). Without such an environment, freedom may not be found in spite of the desires and choices of a person, in Dewey’s view.

Knowing involves relationship, according to both Dewey and Noddings. For Noddings, the primary learning relationship is between one-caring, the educator, and one cared-for, the student<sup>4</sup>. For Dewey, there are many relationships involved in knowing. One such relationship is between the knower and the known, or the subject and object. Another such relationship, further illustrating that Dewey has a picture of the wider environment than Noddings, is the community of inquiry in which the knower is embedded. What is essential about this commonality is the recognition of the role relationship plays in making meaning and engaging in learning.

In summary, according to both Dewey and Noddings learning through schooling must be connected to life and be active. Learning occurs through practice. Education must start with the learner, but not stay only with the learner. According to both, learning takes place through relationships, relationships between the student and educator, as well as between the student and her surroundings.

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<sup>4</sup> I identify this as the primary learning relationship, which is asymmetrical with the educator as the one-caring and the student as the cared-for. This does not preclude other caring relationships in the classroom. Noddings would advocate for educators caring for educators, students caring for students and even students caring for educators.

### **Differences in Noddings' and Dewey's Purposes for Education**

I have not found any relevant irreconcilable aspects of Noddings' and Dewey's work to discuss. Instead, what I wish to point out is differences in their purposes for education. Dewey claims that education is for the sake of growth. Noddings claims that education is for the sake of "the growth of competent, caring, loving and lovable people" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. xxvi), through means such as fostering conditions for care. I have adopted dual aims for educative encounter based on these differences, hoping that educative encounter will promote both growth and specifically, growth in care and response-ability.

"Dewey insisted that growth is its own end; that is, to ask 'growth toward what?' is inconsistent with the concept of growth" (Noddings, 1995, p. 26). However, just as biologically the point of life is more life and yet, "mere proliferation of life" (Noddings, 1995, p. 26) is not always positive, so it is with growth. Dewey's position of growth for more growth is perhaps a discussion starter, inviting us to consider when growth is good growth. Additionally, Dewey's vision of democratic life is clearly normatively substantive. As Pappas says of Dewey's views, "democracy is part of a general moral outlook about how to engage life" (2008, p. xii). For Dewey, "democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint, communicated experience" (1916, p. 87). The means to democracy, in Dewey's view, is uncontestably education (Jay, 2006). More education enables us to live a good life and enables a functioning democratic society, which are moral ends.

As stated in Chapter Four, Noddings has human caring as the center of her aims for education, with hopes of helping students become caring and capable of response-

ability. Achieving her purpose occurs by targeting relations amongst individuals and the conditions that support caring. Noddings' purpose for education creates specificity for Dewey's growth, therefore building, in one area, upon Dewey's purposes for education.

Another minor difference, albeit a reconcilable one between Dewey and Noddings, is where they focused their lenses of concern. Dewey, in the writings I have highlighted, is primarily concerned with how students learn. Noddings, on the other hand, focuses more on critiquing "existing disciplines in the curriculum" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 65). My own questions in this dissertation strongly mirror Dewey's. I want to apply Dewey's focus on how students learn to Noddings' care theory. Noddings addresses how students learn to care, but I want to know how care helps students learn.

### **Noddings and Buber**

Turning to the commonalities between the work of Noddings and Buber, we see many connections; little surprise as Noddings also relied extensively on Buber's work in her own writings and development of care theory. One such connection is the shared belief in relationality of being. Noddings and Buber agree that self is always a self-in-relation. For both philosophers, there is no self to speak of in isolation from relations. For Noddings this is most emphasized in her view on interdependence. According to her, not only do we form ourselves out of our relations with others, relations that exist in and create situations and social pressures, but we also are constricted or freed to be good dependent on how others treat us. Buber highlights his perspective on self-in-relation most clearly through his discussion of the word 'I'. One can never say 'I' without saying 'I-It' or 'I-Thou'. To say 'I' is to acknowledge a self that is distinct from, but in relation to an object or subject. In the same way that Buber articulated the possibility of the

relationship between, say, person and tree, Noddings suggests that care extends beyond persons as well, to include, for example, ideas, animals and objects. This agreement between the two regarding self-in-relation to both subjects and objects is fundamental to this dissertation because it places utmost significance on the role of encounter in our lives.

Noddings and Buber characterize their epistemic and moral stances in terms of relations, between person and person, and person and object. Reminiscent of Noddings' ideas on virtue as existing in relations rather than persons, Buber identifies love as something that cannot exist in one person, but in one's relations (Friedman, 1976). The focus for both is on what takes place between one and another.

Presence and availability are central to relationship as envisioned by both Buber and Noddings. When one is present for another, one's undivided attention is firmly fixed on the other in the current moment without distraction (N. Noddings, 2002a). As Buber states, to be present, one must "really be there" for the other (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 116). Being present is that moment of obvious connection and dialogue, but presence is maintained by what Buber refers to as "subterranean dialogic" (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 116), the enduring, steady and established ongoing underlying connection between one and another. For instance, in an ideal parent/child relationship, even when the parent is not physically or currently present to the child, there is a sense of security that if the child needed the parent she would be able to summon and receive care from the parent, as well as a sense of the parent's presence. Availability is this confidence of being able to summon another when in need. In this case, a student may recognize that the attention of the educator cannot always be on just her, but when a problem, difficulty or need arises,

the educator will become present and available to that student. Understanding presence and availability assuages fears regarding the unbearable, unfulfillable pressure on a person, or an educator specifically, to be in constant relation or caring always for everybody. What counts is establishing a relationship wherein there is recognition that one is there for another, available in a consistent manner when the need arises.

A precondition for I-Thou encounters is that we must offer in relation our truest selves rather than present a fabricated self of who we would like to be. Choosing seeming (who I would like you to think I am) over being (who I am) relates to the human desire to be confirmed, or to be received as a person, but inevitably blocks opportunity for encounter. Noddings, in her work on confirmation, helps us support others in choosing being over seeming. We do this by living and teaching with an attitude of confirmation. If we are willing to attribute best, yet realistic motives to others, then others may spend less time worrying about presenting their best selves rather and more time being their true selves.

When it comes to dialogue, Noddings' intent is to build and maintain relations, which, in part, will support discussion of existential matters. Buber also holds relation as the purpose of dialogue, which he identifies as occurring where two or more are gathered and invested in establishing mutual relation. Both scholars place dialogue as the central part of establishing relation.

In conclusion, relationality of being is essential for both Buber and Noddings, meaning that self is always understood as self-in-relation. Their epistemic and moral stances focus on what takes place between one and another. For relations to begin and



grow, presence and availability are necessary conditions. Care theory is helpful with meeting the I-Thou encounter condition of presenting one's truest selves to another.

### **Irreconcilable Aspects of Noddings' and Buber's Work**

Noddings' relies on Buber's I-Thou encounter in developing her version of a caring encounter. While seemingly compatible on the surface, where the two deviate is in regards to the role of God in encounter, and subsequently, education. The same is true for Dewey; he also differs from Buber in this particular instance of religious commitment. While Noddings does not reject the transcendental, she does reject it in connection to God, as understood by Judaism, Christianity and Islam, while, for Buber, I-Thou encounters are sustained by God, as the center, and by I-Eternal Thou encounters; Eternal Thou being God understood by the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All education, according to Buber, is to reveal God to students and God in the lives of students. This is not the case for Noddings, who has taken up Buber's educational writings, and also values the spiritual side of education, yet leaves alone the religious core of Buber's writings.

Noddings, in her willingness to entertain transcendental aspects of education, addresses spirituality. She does not make explicit the connection between caring and spirituality, though she seems to suggest that spirituality and happiness are linked, in stating that "enhanced awareness of certain features in everyday life can contribute significantly to spiritual life and happiness" (N. Noddings, 2003b, p. 168). Clearly, just as she views virtue as a matter of relations, so she views spirituality. "To connect, to be one, with another person, a tree, a work of art, or God is the height of spiritual life – if that other is perceived as somehow good" (N. Noddings, 2003b, p. 170) for the ones engaged

in connecting. From this description of spirituality we can postulate that when one is engaged in an encounter, one is engaged in the height of spiritual life. The spiritual moments of interest to Noddings are the moments of “complete engagement with what-is-there” (2003b, p. 169), and she relates this to Buber’s concept of encounter, noting that he describes such moments as “manifestations of relation” (2003b, p. 169). Noddings stays away from mention of traditional religious experiences, but highlights common experiences in relation to spiritual moments, experiences such as wonder, awe, gratitude, amazement, imagination, curiosity, awakening, and yearning. In doing so, however, she does not bridge the gap between spirituality, broadly conceived, and interactions with God in accordance with specific religious traditions. In this, her work remains incommensurable with Buber’s work.

I have made a move similar to Noddings by outlining Buber’s work in my analysis with little reference to the religious foundation of his work. The question must be asked, however, what is left out in ignoring the centrality of Buber’s idea of God? If you do not have God as the center, can you have I-Thou encounter? In the way that I present educative encounter, following this synthesis section, I address these questions, though in a somewhat sidestepping manner. There I present a conception of encounter that does not depend on the recognition of God in encounter with us, although it does not preclude God as center. While I present encounter in a manner that is commensurable with both Noddings and Buber, they have not presented encounter in a way that is commensurable with each other’s view, because, Noddings rejects a prescriptive religious version of God while Buber’s view of God is anchored in Judaism.

A minor deviation where Noddings differs from Buber's I-Thou encounter is in her idea of engrossment. When she speaks of engrossment she means that "the soul empties itself of all its own contents to receive the other" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 16). Buber would not ratify the emptying of one's soul to meet another. He uses the term inclusion to refer to what happens when one person meets another in an I-Thou encounter; inclusion does not require an emptying of the one's soul or a bracketing of one's self to meet another. Noddings' interpretation of Buber's inclusion is that educators need to "take on a dual perspective: their own and that of their students" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 107). I find a conflict here between engrossment, or the emptying of one's soul to receive another, and inclusion, or that of seeing both sides present. Engrossment sets aside the one-caring's perspective for the sake of receiving the other's perspective while inclusion, even as modified to mean recognizing an 'other' as an 'other', expands the one-caring's perspective bi-focally so that the other's perspective may be seen.

### **Buber and Dewey**

The relationship between Dewey and Buber, though less clear than that between Dewey and Noddings, is also fairly strong. As noted previously, there are ties between Dewey's conception of experience and Buber's conception of encounter. While Buber's definition of experience differs from that of Dewey, the two ideas share similar ground. For instance, both are active and passive in nature; Dewey's experience involves doing and undergoing while Buber's encounter includes meeting and being met.

There is also strong correlation between Dewey's idea of mis-education and Buber's conception of mis-meeting. Mis-educative experience is that which shuts down present growth and future opportunity for growth. A mis-meeting does much the same in

shutting down relationship, both the relation at hand and in future relations with that other and all others. This connection of ideas on mis-education and mis-meeting matters because it is the work of this dissertation to define educative encounters and to also hold these up against what I conceive as a mis-educative encounter based on the work of Dewey and Buber. For instance, educators must be on the lookout for mis-educative experiences and mis-meetings to prevent the shutting down of growth and relation.

Dewey thinks that education must begin with student interest. Two overarching interests that he identified were communication and construction. People wish to communicate with one another and people wish to construct and create. Communication facilitates us in relating to one another while construction helps us relate to objects. These two overarching interests well match what Buber identified as the two main instincts of people, the instinct of origination and instinct of communion. Origination is much like construction in that it regards the drive to create something from nothing. Communion and communication both refer to contact and relationship between one and another. For both Buber and Dewey, what is essential in interests and instincts is that teaching practices acknowledge and respect both communication and creation/construction/contribution as invaluable to education.

In conclusion, Dewey and Buber both realize the necessity of the active preceding the passive in learning. There is strong association between Dewey's ideas on mis-educative experience and Buber's ideas on mis-meeting. Communication and construction reflect two central interests as identified by both scholars.

### **Irreconcilable Aspects of Buber's and Dewey's Work**

Dewey states that a “thing – anything, everything, in the ordinary or non-technical use of the term” (Dewey, 1981, p. 241) is only what it is experienced to be to a particular person, be that person, in the case of the experience of a canoe, a whitewater canoe guide, a concerned parent watching her child get in the watercraft or the young child himself. Yes, this will result in different accounts of the canoe, however, the incongruity is acceptable provided the accounts are accordingly noted as to who is giving the account. If, as Dewey would recommend, the one experiencing is couched in a community of inquiry, then one's reflection of his experience of a thing will be challenged, encouraged, questioned and refined by those in his community. However, “the adequacy of any particular account is not a matter to be settled by general reasoning, but by finding out what sort of an experience the truth-experience actually is” (Dewey in McDermott, 1981, p. 243). Dewey considers knowing merely one mode of experience. Stating that something is only what it is experienced to be is not tantamount to saying that something is only what it is known to be. Buber would agree with this perspective; where Buber and Dewey differ is how something may be experienced. Dewey states that a person may only experience a thing from their own knowledge standpoint. This standpoint may change, as may the content of the experience. His example is that of a noise that startles, which is later discovered to be a harmless branch scrapping the window. This is not falsehood giving way to truth, but that the experience has changed. Buber challenges Dewey's idea that one can only know through one's experience because, for Buber, a necessary condition of I-Thou encounter is recognizing the other-ness of the other outside of one's own experience of the other. He even goes further than this by stating that in order for

I-Thou encounter to occur, one must be able to experience the standpoint of one's self and of the other.

In noting this incommensurability there is a caution to be issued. I have referred to 'things' as though Buber and Dewey hold the same meaning for 'thing' or for 'other'. This is not entirely the case. For Dewey, in Buber's terminology, 'things' belong to the realm of I-It relations and are objective phenomena. For Buber, 'things' necessarily belong to the realm of I-It except when one is able to go beyond one's experience of the other. This elevates 'things' to the realm of I-Thou. The difference between what each philosopher means when he says 'thing' often lies in the realm in which the 'thing' is placed, not in defining the 'thing' itself. In my estimation, the 'thing' to be experienced in Dewey's writings may refer to ideas, physical objects and people. The same holds true for Buber. One may experience a tree or a person as an object or a subject, depending not on the thing itself but on how that thing is encountered.

Considering how 'things' are encountered as influenced by the realm in which things are placed leads to the discussion begun in chapter two, that of the difference between Dewey's scientific method and Buber's I-Thou encounter. Buber's approach is not intended to override, but rather root, objective ways of knowing. This rootedness is needed because Buber claims that the scientific method is insufficient for knowing the wholeness of a person. Working with the whole person, rather than merely a sum of parts is an important aspect of educative encounter as I am developing it, so it is crucial to consider what it is about the scientific method that excludes wholeness. From Buber's perspective, what excludes wholeness in the scientific method is that it deals entirely in

objects, relegating knowing to subject-object knowing and excluding subject-subject knowing.

Scientific method is man's most highly perfected development of the I-It, or subject-object, way of knowing. Its methods of abstracting from the concrete actuality and of largely ignoring the inevitable difference between observers reduce the I in so far as possible to the abstract knowing subject and the It in so far as possible to the passive and abstract object of thought. (Friedman, 1976, p. 173)

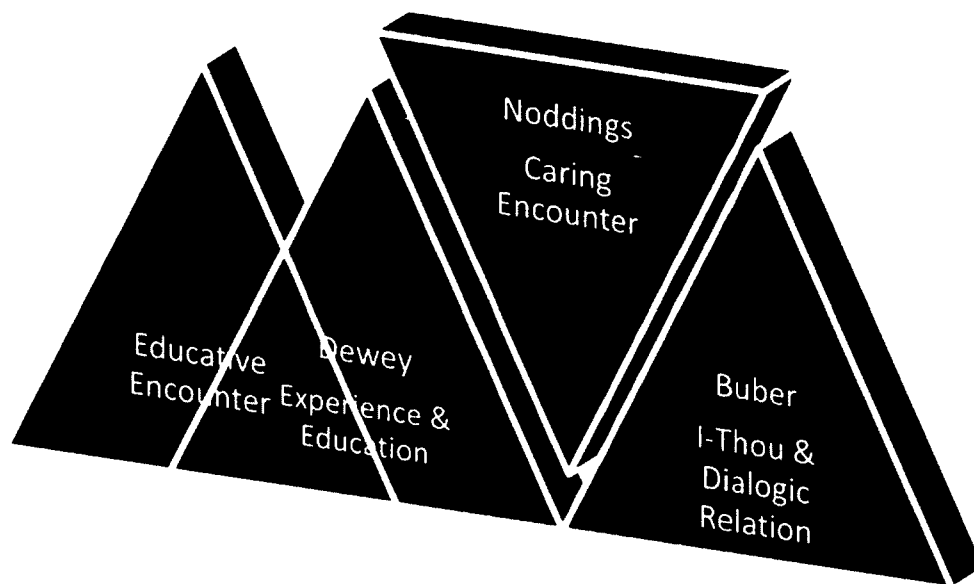
Provided there is recognition, however, that subject-object relation is not the primary relation, but that primary relation exists elsewhere, namely in I-Thou, or dialogical, knowing, then subject-object knowing may be rooted in I-Thou encounter, which helps overcome this debilitating abstractness. "Subject-object knowledge fulfills its true function only in so far as it retains its symbolic quality of pointing back to the dialogical knowing from which it derives" (Friedman, 1976, p. 172). Dewey's scientific method, however, differs enough from what is typically described as 'the' scientific method to show some compatibilities with Buber's I-Thou encounter. For instance, both advocate that the role of observer be changed to role of participant, "who only afterwards gains the distance from his subject matter which will enable him to formulate the insights he has attained" (Buber in Friedman, 1976, pp. 172-173). This opens the door for the essential integration of Buber's dialogical knowing through I-Thou encounter with Dewey's scientific method as a basis for educative encounter.

### **Synthesis Summary**

Central to this dissertation is asking how Dewey, Noddings and Buber each help make for the most useful conception of educative encounter. Beginning my analysis, presented in Chapter Two, I was uncertain how precisely the three philosopher's would come together to support my conception of encounter. As I analyzed relevant work of

Dewey, Noddings and Buber, a picture formed in my mind of how the three philosophers fit together and contribute to my new conception of educative encounter. I depict this image as seen in Figure 1. Dewey and Buber are positioned similarly, side by side, with Noddings nestled in between them both and this notion of educative encounter resting on top of all three. Dewey and Buber are side by side because their work can be seen as parallel theories regarding how we know, and yet, they both incompletely address encounter. Dewey fails to address encountering beyond encountering objects. Buber, while stating that I-It encountering is necessary, does little to advise how this should best be done. Noddings fits in between the two because she draws on both philosophers to form care theory. Noddings defines caring encounters, which may or may not be educative. I am working towards a theory that goes beyond what she has done in the realm of education, by articulating what an educative encounter that is based on caring encounters looks like. Noddings' addresses learning to care and being guided ethically by care. What I find missing is how care can promote learning beyond learning to care. These gaps that are missing in each of the three philosophers leaves opportunity for offering a complete conception of encounter so that educative encounters may be increased in quality and quantity, potentially improving teaching practices in higher education. This is the contribution of my dissertation.





In the next section, I discuss the unique contributions of Dewey, Noddings and Buber. The commonalities amongst the three philosophers present the possibility for a synthesized understanding of relational being and knowing in the world, supporting the conception of educative encounter as I am developing it for the purposes of teaching and learning. In order to produce a strong conception of educative encounter there is more to braiding Dewey, Noddings and Buber together than merely pointing out their commonalities and differences. Beyond their commonalities, work must be done to

understand how each uniquely, or in some cases best, contributes to my conception of educative encounter.

### **On Dewey's Contribution**

I consider Dewey's idea on subject-object knowing to be his strongest unique contribution in connection with defining educative encounter because it comes from a pragmatic approach to learning that is established in experience. As delineated in the analysis of Dewey's ideas in Chapter Two, his particular contributions stem from his writings on self, continuity and interaction; growth; truth and knowing; inquiry; direct experience and reflection; and finally, interest as related to educative encounter. His approach to subject-object relation and knowing is also useful in developing this notion of educative encounter because, in part, of how he perceives the nature of the learner. Dewey places the learner in an active role, helping to form and create meaning, within a socio-cultural context. Taking an active role is an essential part of encounter – without one's action there will be no educative encounter. Thoreau nicely compares the two when he says:

Which would have advanced the most at the end of a month, - the boy who has made his own jackknife from the ore which he had dug and smelter, reading as much as would be necessary for this, or the boy who had attended the lectures of metallurgy at the institute in the meanwhile, and had received a Rodgers' penknife from his father? Which would be most likely to cut his fingers? To my astonishment I was informed on leaving college that I had studied navigation! Why, if I had taken one turn down the harbor I should have known more about it. (in Hunt, 1999, p. 120)

Dewey sees that learning is meant to be connected with life and meant to engage the whole learner, and thus requiring active participation on the part of the learner. Though Dewey gives importance to the instructor, he does not see the mind as a container to be filled by an expert. His approach is much more transformational than additive. Students

have opportunity to encounter on their own and within a community of inquiry guided by an educator. This perspective on learning and the learner affords direct access in a participatory manner to knowing. In part, this participatory manner refers to transaction, which is “ongoing activity where the body-mind balances its well-being with the constantly changing environment” (McGough, 2005, p. 22) by adapting and by transforming both one’s self and one’s environment, both constituting each other. The educator, then, is to be present to encountering in an educative manner with the students and to facilitate their educative encounters. The contribution of learners is meant to be useful from the start, exerting influence on means and ends.

### **On Buber’s Contribution**

Dewey’s perspective on learning and the learner is limited to discussion on subject-object knowing. In typical epistemology conversations, little consideration is given to knowing others as the focus is on knowing objects. What happens when the known is also a knower? Buber offers a foundation for Dewey’s subject-object knowing in his concept of I-Thou encounter. He explains, as indicated in Chapter Three, how we know others and become known by others, which acts as a foundation for subject-object knowing. I agree with Buber that knowing must begin with our relation to others. By beginning with knowing others, Buber bursts apart the paradigm of knowing based only on our experience of objects, including viewing other people as objects. Buber helps us recognize that there is more to the other than what the other is experienced to be and in fact, we must, in order to encounter the other, be able to experience from the other’s standpoint. This is significant, but Buber does little to develop how we should know

outside of knowing other knowers, which is why his work is incomplete without Dewey's work.

### **On Noddings's Contribution**

In my visualizing of how Dewey, Buber and Noddings fit together, Noddings rests on the work of Buber and Dewey rather than coming alongside their work. While I see Dewey and Buber as parallel theories, Noddings furthers their work by offering care theory, with its ethical implications for education. It is not that the others are lacking an ethical framework within which educational aims could be developed, but that I think Noddings' ethical framework is more fulsome in that she more clearly demarcates relation at the center. Her ethical framework is also, unlike Dewey's, a formal ethical system, as Dewey spent much of his writing in relation to ethics on critique of traditional ethical systems rather than offering a clear, coherent alternative (Pappas, 2008).

Noddings' ethics of care provides clear direction in answering the question 'what do I do?' by leading us to engage in considering what the other needs and what actions will build, maintain and support caring relations. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Noddings' ethics of care puts relation and the needs of the other at the center of any moral decision making. A caring relationship is one in which both members of the relationship are likely aware of the care-giving and receiving. When caring, "each must decide how to meet the other and what to do with the moment" (N. Noddings, 2005, p. 24), and the answer to these questions of 'how to meet' and 'what to do' are to be responsive to the other and treat the other with attitudes and actions of care. From this, an educative encounter is conceivable. We can see, then, that educative encounter is rooted in an ethic of care as its moral framework.

What Dewey did accomplish, however, according to Gregory Pappas, was taking the “local, unique, qualitative, and ineffable as starting points and as the basis for what is universal and cognitive” (2008, p. 8). In accepting this, we can accept that Dewey laid some important groundwork for Noddings’ ethics of care to arise. Todd Lekan (2003) and Steven Fesmire (2003) also indirectly provide evidence that Noddings’ ethical work has some roots in Dewey’s in claiming that pragmatic ethics work to revise traditional approaches in suggesting that moral principles are not meant to operate as rules, but rather as deliberations for informing judgment, that moral norms come from lived experience, and that moral character is embodied, historically contextual and social. Noddings’ work is perhaps based, in large part, on Dewey’s work on moral experience, but her work develops Dewey’s work further and it is for this reason that her framework in ethics of care, as delineated in Chapter Four, is the framework within which educative encounter will operate.

What this dissertation does is operate within Noddings’ moral framework while applying this framework to learning. Caring encounters are not necessarily learning encounters outside of learning to care, nor is it necessary for caring encounters to be learning encounters. In some instances, care is needed, with action done to meet this need, following which the care is received. In an educational context, however, with learning as a primary characteristic of education, Noddings’ work is not sufficient for promoting educative encounters. Therefore, I have identified not only how the three philosophers contribute to the conception of encounter that I am developing, but I have identified, as depicted in the pyramid of triangles, that there is a space for development of their ideas, in part by relying on the work of Dewey, Noddings and Buber, and, in part,

by addressing what the combination of the three fail to address fully; namely, what is meant when we refer to the notion of educative encounter. I endeavor to articulate what I mean by educative encounter next, followed, in Chapter Six, by examining how educative encounter occurs with self, others and the world.

### **Putting It All Together**

Encounter is the aspect of experience that takes place between one and another, both between subject and object as well as between subject and subject. This place between refers to the relational component of experience. In the case of subject and subject, it is meeting and being met in unison; one person meeting another and that other person acknowledging that a meeting is transpiring. In a schematic interpretation of encounter, A meets B, in that A performs some act, namely initiating dialogue, in accordance with meeting, and B recognizes that A is meeting B and responds by participating in dialogic relation with the other. It is active, requiring the one encountering to act. It is also passive, requiring the one encountering to receive the other. This schematic account is only accurate if the one being encountered is open to the encounter and has something to contribute by means of receiving the other and offering one's self in return. If both the active and passive components are not present, then what has transpired is not an educative encounter in the sense that I am developing here.

Dewey's idea of continuity transfers to encounter. Just as every experience takes up parts of prior experience, every encounter bears the mark of encounters that have already occurred. A large measure of what is taken up and carried forward from previous educative encounters to current and future educative encounters is habit, broadly defined to encompass "the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it

covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding [mentally, emotionally, physically] to all the conditions which we meet in living” (Dewey, 1938, p. 35). Education based on educative encounters entails forming habits to help us meet and be met well.

Educative encounter belongs to the realm of primary experience as it is part of firsthand or direct experience. If this is not so the meeting is based on someone else’s relationship rather than the formation of one’s own relationship with the subject or object. This does not mean that an encounter is unmediated, in part because of the aforementioned continuity and in part because even within a primary experience many influences are being exerted in meaning making. Recognition of educative encounter as being firsthand is imperative because this condition of encounter carries great implications for fostering educative encounters in higher education classrooms, including recognizing the role of reflection in learning to, and from, encounter. Dewey places primary experience in process. An object is experienced. A problem is posed by the experience or a question is raised. Experimentation and study ensues and the understanding of the object is refined through reflection, after which, the original experience is returned to in order to ‘test out’ new ideas, conclusions, and/or conceptions. Dewey defines reflection in experience as “the discernment of the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence” (1981, p. 499). Without reflection, experience has no connection to learning. This is also true of educative encounters.

Certain conditions must be met for an educative encounter to occur:

1. **Proximity:** Familiarity is imperative to this notion of educative encounter in that it relates to subject-to-subject or subject-to-object meetings.

2. **Genuine Mutuality:** The meeting must take place in a spirit of genuine mutuality, which requires trust of the one being met that the other is really there for her, present in a consistent manner.
3. **Moderate Inclusiveness:** One must be able to understand one's own experience as well as that of the other as best as possible and recognize the other as having inherent value and identity, not just in connection to one's own value and identification.
4. **Humility:** One must not be full of herself lest one's ego obstructs reception.
5. **Love:** Working of the whole being towards relation must be anchored in love, defined in this case as responsibility for another in how we see them.
6. **Being Real:** Presenting an accurate depiction of one's self rather than projecting an image of how one would like to be known is necessary so that the relation is not limited to a superficial level.
7. **Separation:** One must be able to see one's self as separate, or distant, from others while in relation with others.
8. **Mutual Action:** Joining with another to share your self and welcome the other, making meaning for both you and the other.
9. **Confirmation:** Acknowledging the best in the other.

While I identify these conditions as necessary for an educative encounter to occur, in the sense that if they all coincide, an educative encounter will occur, this conception of educative encounter does admit degrees. There is categorical difference between what is and what is not an educative encounter, but within that which is an educative encounter, the quality, in terms of force and function, of the educative encounter may vary. When all of these identified conditions coincide, an educative encounter will take place and will be a high quality or strong educative encounter. These conditions, therefore, are necessary for assurance that a strong educative encounter will occur. If some of these conditions are absent or weak, the occurrence of an educative encounter is not precluded, though what takes place may not be as strong of an encounter.



## **Conclusion**

What has been achieved in this chapter is braiding together the three strands of Dewey, Noddings and Buber by considering complementary aspects amongst their ideas on encounter, incommensurable parts and finally what each of the three uniquely contributes to this notion of educative encounter. Exploration of what encounter actually means based on the analysis and synthesis finishes the discussion in this chapter. In the following chapter, I will proceed to consider the quality of educative encounter. This will include considering the specifics of educative encounter, in relation to self, others and the world, so that we may more fully envision educative encounters.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **ARENAS OF ENCOUNTER**

Though educative encounters may transpire in almost any setting, schooling, including higher education, provides a unique opportunity for learning through such encounters. Time devoted by students and educators in school is spent for the explicit purpose of learning. Students expect and are expected to become educated at school. The contents of such education is widely contested, with some purporting that learning to be a democratic citizen is a must (Dewey, 1916; Pappas, 2008) while others propose ecological literacy as a necessary central component of education (Knapp, 1992; D. Orr, 1994; D. W. Orr, 1992). The point of this chapter and this dissertation is not to formulate an educational theory that offers judgment in the current content discussions. The point, rather, is to recommend educative encounter as a means to education that fits a variety of course content, particularly aimed at, but not exclusive to, higher education. As delineated in Chapter Five, educative encounter is the relational aspect of experience that entails firsthand meeting and being met in a manner which results in learning. This concept matters for higher education because it can lead to new classroom pedagogies for the purpose of encouraging growth in general and “the growth of competent, caring, loving and lovable people” (N. Noddings, 2005, p. xxvi). The work of this dissertation describes educative encounters and explains how a person learns to have and through educative encounters. In this chapter, the focus is on this explanation of learning to have and from educative encounters so that the implications for higher education may be considered in Chapter Seven.

### **Arenas of Encounter**

In furthering both understanding of and ability to facilitate this conception of educative encounter, three arenas or locations where educative encounter occurs are explored. As outlined in Chapter One, this exploration will be guided by grounding the conception experientially. In what follows, a description of each arena is provided, along with how a person learns to encounter and through encounter in each of these arenas. The arenas under discussion here are self, others, and the world, encompassing nature, ideas, and places. Each of these arenas was chosen because it encapsulates significant “spheres in which... relation arises” (Buber in Biemann, 2002, p. 183). Not only are they significant spheres within which relation arises, but they are inclusive of all the possible terrain for encounters.

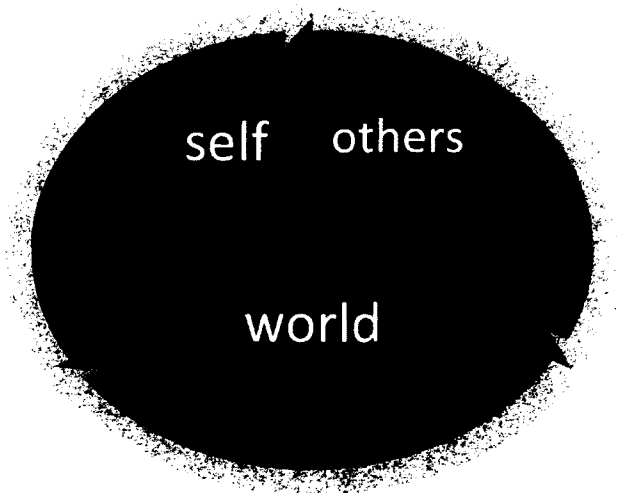
This terrain is far reaching beyond a classroom and beyond a college. There are many reasons for exploring relationships in this dissertation, such as mother/daughter relationships, that typically are not a part of the college classroom. Exploring such relationships is important because these relationships constitute the self that is the student in one’s classroom. To respect the importance of these relationships and potentially contribute to these relationships by leading a class in learning through in an educative encounter manner is a laudable aim. It is not only for the relationships that exist outside of the classroom already or in the classroom, but for the relationships that will exist in the future that we attend to self, others and the world as relates to higher education and beyond. Considering encounters with such things as wild animals, seldom a part of college courses, gives educators a comprehensive understanding of the conception to broadly understand the work done in the classroom to prepare students to learn in an

educative encounter manner long after a particular course is over. Just how some of this terrain not typically a part of higher education may actually be brought into the higher education classroom will be highlighted in Chapter Seven.

The term arena may be slightly misleading. Each arena identified is indeed terrain for educative encounters, but not such that each has a definitive border separating it from the other arenas. The self, as presented herein for instance, is socially constructed and relationally based and therefore not isolated from the arenas of other and world. The advantage of discussing three different arenas is that the distinction enables a honing in on specifics unique to each arena. In actuality, though, it is important to remember that the borders between the arenas are permeable, flexible and touching, as depicted. The illustration also shows how each of the arenas is a piece of the whole, rather than a whole unto its own. As such, taken together as a whole, the arenas do include all possible locations for encounter.

Figure 3

Arenas of Encounter



The first arena of encounter, self, is a particularly difficult arena to delimit conceptually. One difficulty is that educative encounter, as being developed in this dissertation, centers on encountering an 'other' and the idea that one's self may be both one and an 'other' is challenging to demonstrate. To be an arena of encounter, an understanding of self must be established in such a manner as to explain how self can be both one and an 'other'. Defining self in a manner that grants that the self may be encountered as an 'other' furthers the work of defining educative encounter and helps meet the potential objection that encountering the self is not possible. Self matters as an arena because in learning to meet one's self, a foundation may be built for learning to relate to others. Once the self is defined, and the question of how one encounters one's self answered, learning to and from this type of educative encounter will be addressed.

Life with others is the second arena of educative encounter. In this case others are other humans, both intimate others and others that are, until encountered, strangers. The range of possible relationships to other humans is enormous. Though some relational encounters may be fleeting and brief while others last a lifetime, all hold potential, given the right conditions, attitudes and actions, to have educative encounters occur. The significance of this arena is that learning to and from encountering others will potentially well serve both individuals and society as a whole. No matter what career, no matter how a home is constituted, most people must interact with others on a regular basis throughout their lifetime. When students of mine have groaned over yet another group project I remind them that life is a group project. The ability to see others as subjects, not just

objects and the ability to educatively encounter others has potential professional and personal benefits.

The world is the final arena in which educative encounter takes places. By the world I mean animals, plants, ideas, places and things. This arena is potentially vast and influential for educative encounter. The importance of examining this arena is to open up the classroom for the educative influence beyond that of self, classmates and educator to embrace the educative potential in one's relationship with the subject and the world. This does not necessarily change the content of what is learned, but the approach to how the content is learned. Rather than knowing about the world from information transmitted and facts learned, one will learn through one's relationship with the world, fostering more than informational knowing. As Gruenewald (2003) identified, "people are capable of perceiving places and learning from that direct experience [and thus] our ability to perceive places can be either thwarted or fostered by educational experience" (p. 625). In examining this arena, I will explore how we learn to meet the world and learn from meeting the world in a more relational manner than is typical in our day to day lives.

### **Self as an Arena of Educative Encounter**

In discussing this arena of self, an overview of various conceptions of self will be given to help situate the current discussion on self. From here, a reminder of the views of Dewey, Noddings and Buber will be provided to lead into laying out a conception of self that supports educative encounter such that the self may be the other encountered. How a person learns to encounter one's self as an 'other' and how a person learns from encountering one's self that is other will then be delineated.

## **Conceptions of Self**

There are many views of self in educational psychology. In this section, a brief overview of some prominent Western and Eastern conceptions of self is provided. The purpose of this overview is establishing the broad landscape of conceptions of self in order to locate the conception of self that enables the achievement of the developing conception of educative encounter and to illustrate that questions regarding what is a self, by no means, have been finalized. The conceptions of self to be explored span from considering the self as an isolated, separate being to a more socially constructed, communal self, and finally to a non-self.

Most Western educational psychology has tended towards a separate, inner self; a self that has been described as a thing (Mosig, 2006), as is evident in the self that is assumed in much educational research. Psychologist Jack Martin (2007) offers three categories of self, into which most theories fit: expressive (shown in studies of self-concept and-esteem); managerial (self-efficacy and self-regulation studies); and communal (found in “situated learning, social cognition, learning communities, sociocultural psychology, hermeneutics, pragmatism, and critical theory” [p. 80]).

Regarding the expressive self, what is emphasized is “the importance of *self-expression* as a basic right and obligation of individual members of society who bear a unique and potentially valuable first-person perspective on the world and themselves” (J. Martin, 2007, p. 81). A positive sense of self is beneficial to the individual and to society, enabling individuality to be conveyed. This category of self is centered on humanistic concerns for this expression of individuality and for understanding one’s self. The self to be understood and expressed is “a highly sensitive, reactive inner core of each person” (J.

Martin, 2007, p. 81). Sigmund Freud's (1940) ideas would fit into this category, identifying the inner self as consisting of the id, ego and super ego, with only the ego operating at a conscious level (in Mosig, 2006). Two others that may be considered for their work on understanding the struggle of expressing the self includes Karen Horney (1950), who distinguished between ideal and real self and Gordon Allport (1961), distinguishing between self-as-knower and self-as-object (in Mosig, 2006). Finally, Carl Jung's work (1942) in self-realization, by "distinguishing between the ego as center of consciousness and the self as the emergent integration of the polarities of the personality" (in Mosig, 2006, pp. 40-41) led the way for Abraham Maslow and Carl Roger's self-actualization. Rogers (1951) defined the self as "an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the 'I' or 'me,' together with values attached to these concepts" (in Mosig, 2006, p. 41). These various psychologists show efforts in capturing what it means to be an expressive self.

The second category given by Martin (2007) is the managerial category, which regards the "self's ability to monitor, manage, motivate, strategize, and reinforce itself with respect to the successful completion of specific academic tasks" (p. 81). In this category, self-confidence is of utmost concern, both promotion and development for the purpose of producing capabilities of acting and reflecting. With this in mind, "the self is conceptualized as highly rational and strategic, making use of cognitive processes and operations to process information so that it can be meaningfully stored, recalled, and assembled" (J. Martin, 2007, p. 82). Aristotle's self is one that fits in this category, as the self he wrote about was made up of "the settled character states (*hexeis*) that lend stability to human emotions and actions" (Kristjansson, 2010, p. 399). Albert Adler's (1927) work



also fits in this category with his work on the creative self, focused on developing innate abilities to compensate for inadequacies and develop competencies (in Mosig, 2006).

Both expressive and managerial selves focus on what is going on inside of a person. These categories both reflect what is known as Cartesian selves, isolated, but interactive with their external environment, accepting dualisms that include “strong divides between inner and outer, mind and world, and personal and social” (J. Martin, 2007, p. 82). While the two categories share much in common, the expressive self is more concerned with personal development of individual freedom and self-fulfillment with the managerial self being concerned with institutional socialization by means of self-control for purposes of civic virtue. The category of communal self, to be discussed next, perhaps takes civic virtue to be of importance, like managerial selves, but places emphasis on self-fulfillment like the expressive self.

Unlike expressive and managerial selves, the communal self is “formed through interaction with others in families, classrooms, and elsewhere. This communal self is always embedded in a co-constitutive self-other, self-societal dialectic” (J. Martin, 2007, p. 83). Lev Vygotsky (1978) laid the groundwork for questions to be asked as to how a self is formed, not just what influences a presupposed established self. His work on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) expanded consideration of a child’s capability, looking at the area of capability a child possesses apparent through guided or assisted problem solving, or, as he states, the ZPD is “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). His work on the

difference between capabilities when isolated and capabilities in collaboration points to a self that is formed in relation. “There is a large difference between saying that the self is influenced by social, cultural factors and contexts versus conceptualizing the self as forged within such communal contexts through relational practices in which others are indispensable” (J. Martin, 2007, p. 86).

A related idea is James Wertsch’s (1991) idea of “mind beyond the skin” (p. 33). He gives an example of the young daughter and father discussing where she might have left her toy, triggering her memory. This is a great example of what is referred to as mind beyond the skin, meaning what we know more expansively in connection to those around us (Wertsch, 1991). The little girl would not have remembered where her toy was had she not connected with her father regarding the lost toy.

Barbara Rogoff (2003) also hearkens to a communal self, viewing development of this self as a matter of guided participation, structuring of a child’s social world, and communication, both verbal and non-verbal. As relational practices are essential to this conception of self, it follows that the conception of self that is best suited to educative encounters is a communal self. A self, in the communal perspective, is greater than what is contained in one body, for it is through transacting with the world that a self grows and develops. This has direct relevance to an educational theory, particularly this developing notion of educative encounter, putting stock in learning and subsequent growth through encounter. A communal self is one that is seen as dynamic rather than fixed, also contributing to its suitability for educative encounters. It is also in this category that Noddings, Dewey and Buber may be placed. Before turning attention to a review of these philosophers’ views on self, attention is given to one more conception of self, the

category of non-self. In part, this category is raised to show a conception of self that is non-Western, and in part, to look beyond communal self.

Buddhism, for instance, defines self in terms of non-self. There is not one thing in existence without “the interconnected net of causal conditions” (Mosig, 2006, p. 42). Everything, including any one person, is made up of parts of everything else, which is identified as inter-being. There is “no real existence other than as temporary (impermanent) collections of parts” (Mosig, 2006, p. 42). Self is a label for particular configuration of parts called skandhas. Just as a car has many parts that when separated are not a car, a person is made up of many parts, such as “form, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness” (Mosig, 2006, p. 42) each depending on the other four for being. Feelings, for instance, are shaped by form, perceptions, impulses and consciousness. The skandha consciousness consists of perception (sight, sound, touch, taste, feel), cognitive (“knowing, evaluating, imagining, conceiving, and judging” [Mosig, 2006, p. 46]), mind (thinking and awareness), and finally, storehouse consciousness. “Upon realizing the universal oneness of all, the ‘selfless Self’, everyone and everything *is* oneself, this transcendent wisdom generates universal compassion and caring of everyone as oneself. To hurt another becomes to hurt oneself; to help another is to help oneself” (Mosig, 2006, p. 46). This idea of non-self is raised to contrast western and eastern views of self, but also because it relates to the communal view of self in how it recognizes the connectedness of all.

### **Dewey, Buber and Noddings on Self**

In each analysis of the philosophers of encounter (Chapters Two-Four), their views on self were given. A reminder of what each has to say regarding self is in order.

What is gained from Dewey's views on self are an understanding of self as being in process, as dynamic, fluid and diverse. Dewey (1922) sees a self as a self in the making, characteristics of which are: action and thoughts are directed outwards, openness, receptivity, growth, directness, courage, trust, and an ability to broaden one's self. Dewey's (1922) self is a continuing construction by means of externally oriented action founded on impulse and habit. From Buber (1958a), the self is understood always in relationship, either I as relating to It (other objects) or I as relating to Thou (other subjects). Part of this relationship consists of identifying one's self as distinct from other selves. The other part defines how one connects in this relationship, whether to a world of objects, as in I-It or to a world of subjects, as in I-Thou. Though his analysis of a self was largely done through consideration of interpersonal relationships, for educative encounter to occur in this arena of self, Buber's ideas must be transposed on the interpersonal to the intrapersonal, which will be done in following section. Noddings' view of self is one that corresponds well with Buber's view as she sees self always as self-in-relation. In addition to being interdependent, in Noddings' (2003a) view, people are also morally interdependent: how good one person can be depends in part by how others treat that person. Finally, Noddings' view of self as developing or making rather than developed or made, opens the door for encountering the self, stating that this occurs when a reflexive self is able to question itself.

### **Defining Self in Accordance with Educative Encounter**

There is much to explore to understand a self that can be its own 'other' to encounter. One of the problems in defining the self as other is that self has been used as a term that is inherently singular, meaning that which is contained in one body, and to

speak of many selves in one person may bring to mind schizophrenia. A person, however, is not one unified being, but a multi-faceted, socially shaped being. In part, it must be understood that this self that can be its' own self is a dialectical self. According to Thomas E. Wren (1993), the dialectical self involves the self as "a node in a web of social or interpersonal relations and not an epistemically or psychologically self-sufficient subject" (pp. 84-85 in Pagan, 2008, p. 241). As discussed above, according to Dewey, Noddings and Buber, self must also be understood to be dynamic. "For Dewey, then, as it moves from one situation to another, the healthy individual moral self is always changing, growing, reconfiguring itself or is in the process of being shaped or created depending on its actions" (Pagan, 2008, p. 244). A self that may encounter its' self as an 'other' or as others is shown in a polyphonic model of self. In this model, self is viewed as a "'dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous *I* positions in an imaginal landscape' in which 'the *I* has the possibility to move from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time'" (Hermans, Rijks, & Kempen, 1993, p. 215 in Cooper, 2003, pp. 131-132). Self-pluralistic theorists "(e.g., Berne, 1961; Stone & Winkelman, 1985) have argued that dialogical relationships between different *I*-positions can be established" (in Cooper, 2003, p. 132). "The *I* in the one position" writes Hermans (2001a), "can agree, disagree, understand, misunderstand, oppose, contradict, question, challenge and ridicule the *I* in another position" (p. 249 in Cooper, 2003, p. 132). This is not a position that Buber would have supported, as he did not view intrapersonal (arena of self) dialogue as equal to interpersonal (arena of others) (Cooper, 2003); however, it would seem that they do not have to be viewed as equal to both be essential arenas of educative encounter. "There is a form of self-meeting that sits somewhere between

interpersonal dialogue and intrapersonal monologue... that...a client may have a 'real meeting' with aspects of himself or herself that he or she has never met before" (Cooper, 2003, pp. 142-143). As Martin (2011) states, "in an educational event or encounter, the educator and the learner can be one and the same individual" (p. 65).

### **Learning to Encounter Self**

Whether learning to encounter self, others or the world, there are not prescribed steps that lead to educative encounter. One cannot make educative encounters happen. What can be done is recognizing what conditions, attitudes and actions are conducive for the occurrence of educative encounters followed by learning to foster these conditions, attitudes and actions. Lack of control over the occurrence of educative encounters does not mean there is a lack of responsibility for fostering conditions conducive to encounters on the part of educators. Though making educative encounters occur may be beyond the control of an educator, an educator certainly has much to contribute to producing educative encounters. Gardening provides a useful metaphor in that a gardener, in a certain sense, has no control over the final outcome of the garden, but much to contribute to that outcome. I am reminded of my mother-in-law's pumpkin patch, which was very productive this summer season. Even given productivity some pumpkins grew to the size of a human torso while in the same time some grew to the size of a human head. These outcomes were not dictated by the actions of my mother-in-law, but the pumpkins would not have grown at all had she not planted the seeds and tended to the plants throughout the summer. Like gardening, producing educative encounters is dependent on the actions of those involved and the happenstance of the right set of circumstances; in the case of gardening, these supportive circumstances include soil, rain, and lack of infestation of

bugs and for educative encounter, these supportive circumstances may include weather (more difficult in -50C weather to be available to meet others), background noise (a sports bar may be too noisy, a library too quiet) and being ‘unplugged’ (attention not distracted by cell phones and computers). Those in higher education, as I argue, should facilitate educative encounters and may do so by facilitating conditions, dispositions and actions that contribute to the occurrence of educative encounters.

In part, learning to encounter self requires a measure of discord. This is because, as Buber states, “one cannot encounter something that one is” (in Cooper, 2003, p. 137). There must somehow be the presence of an ‘other.’ There are two forms of discord that come to mind that foster a self that can be an ‘other.’ The first is discord between the external environment and internal landscape. Recently, my husband Jon was shoveling snow off the roof, but preferred to be anywhere but on the roof. As he tells it, while his body stayed on the roof and performed the task at hand, his mind, still allocating sufficient resources to keep him on the roof, safe and functional, travelled to rivers he wants to paddle and houses he wants to build. Though not in a physical sense, Jon was in two places at once, an experience which is a building block in learning to encounter self because it demonstrates to a person how his self may be present to one thing happening, such as shoveling snow on a roof, while present to another place of the mind. This requires more than imagination. It requires a self that consists of more than one self.

Another form of discord is entirely internal, often referred to as cognitive dissonance. I know better than to eat an entire bag of potato chips in one sitting by myself, and yet I may find myself doing so. In this, I am encountering an aspect of myself that did what another aspect of my ‘self’ knew was a bad idea. While it is occurring, my

internal dialogue is at times chastising myself while I continue to indulge in the potato chips. It is no wonder an image emerged of the battle for one's self with an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. I propose that there are not external other-worldly beings daily engaged in battles aiming to have a person do good or evil; rather, this is merely a way of explaining the internal dialogue that occurs between different multi-facets of one's self. These multi-facets are part of what is meant in saying that the self can be an 'other,' for these facets make up the others. Discord that invites internal dialogue in the form of an argument highlights these various facets and is important for learning to encounter self as other by teaching us to dialogue, if at first in the form of argument, with one's self.

There are both direct and indirect means in learning to encounter these 'others' that make up a self. Mick Cooper (2003), educational counselor, has done work towards understanding harmful and helpful encounters amongst one's self. He took Buber's interpersonal model of I-It and I-Thou encounter and used it to create an intrapersonal model by considering I-It encounters to be I-Me encounters and I-Thou encounters being I-I encounters. In I-Me encounters, much like I-It encounters, an aspect of self gets delineated to an objective, thing-like category. It is evident that a person identifies facets of herself as 'Me,' or as an object, when she talks about rather than experiences with that other; identifying this other 'I' as coming from outside oneself, almost as in 'the devil made me do it' rather than 'I' choose to do it; dealing with only facets, not the whole; explaining away this other; dealing with it in the past tense; using generalized rather than specific terms; disconfirming rather than confirming; having an entirely cognitive relation with the other; and finally, a demonstrated lack of openness to the other (Cooper, 2003).



Obviously, the converse of this description encapsulates the aim of learning to encounter self as an ‘other,’ in the sense that one should learn how to experience with one’s self, taking responsibility for various facets of self, appreciating the whole of self, working in the present and in the particular with the other, engaging the other with one’s whole being and being open to the other. In focusing on creating conditions for I-Thou encounters in the classroom, a person may learn to have I-I encounters (Cooper, 2003). Direct ways, however, of learning to encounter self, according to Cooper (2003) for the purposes of therapy include descriptive, projective and experiential exercises. Descriptive exercises include writing or talking about various I’s that constitute a self. Instead of describing, projective exercises encourages dialogue between various selves. Writing a play where each character is a self or making masks for each self are examples of projective exercises. Experiential exercises go a step further by encouraging the embodiment of various selves. Role playing is an example of this, where there is one actor, many parts. Considering the earlier claim that encountering the self as an ‘other’ requires a measure of discord, part of learning to encounter self is learning to face and engage uncomfortable situations and to be open to what is going on when there is internal conflict. While these exercises, suggested by Cooper (2003), may be for the explicit purposes of therapy, there is room, and need, in education, including higher education, for exercises that invite similar educative encounters with ones’ self.

At the University of New Hampshire, both Dr. Ann Diller and Dr. Barbara Houston use an assignment they term ‘AIMS Project,’ which consists of an undertaking exploring a personal pattern of automatic recurrent behavior chosen by the student meant to increase her self-knowledge about some aspect of herself. As this assignment occurs in

education courses, the self that is meant to be explored is the self that teaches. Questions provided for exploring this behaviour to learn more about ones' self are: what appears to 'trigger' a behavior pattern, how are reactions experienced – what thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations arise in the midst of this happening? The project culminates in a short essay meant for reporting on what the student did (or stopped doing), how often, what happened, what arose for the student, and what insights the student gathered about himself. Obviously a project like this does not necessarily bring about an educative encounter with self, but it provides impetus and conditions to help foster such an encounter.

As an example of such exploration, let me share what my undertaking was for one such AIMS project. I set out to understand my tendency towards embarrassment. I panic when I do not know what the 'right' thing is to do, which could prove to be challenging in teaching. One semester I had been attending the Quaker Friend's Meeting in Dover, meeting for silent worship for an hour. Once my pew was shared by a dear woman who had welcomed me warmly more than once to the church. This particular Sunday all is quiet when I hear her start to snore. All my attention goes into high alert and all I can hear is her noisy sleep breathing. My superego likes to make sure that I do the right thing always. When I do not know what is right to do, there is a great internal scrambling. My internal dialogue followed something like this: "Should I nudge her? That seems rude." So I wiggle the pew. She's still snoring. I shift my position and cross and re-cross my knees. She's still snoring. "Boy she's having a good sleep. Maybe she needs it. Maybe I just need to relax. Ok, relax. Nope. Do others hear her? Oh, this is terrible. What do I do? Why won't she wake up? Why did I have to sit next to someone who would not only fall

asleep, but snore? This is so embarrassing! I'm so embarrassed!" Why am I embarrassed? For her? Well, yes, but for me too because I feel the heavy pressure of an unidentifiable expectation. I feel I am expected to correct this incorrect situation for all our sakes. Where does this sense of responsibility come from? It seems stupid. I seem stupid. Why can't I just settle down and listen to the spirit. Breathe in. Deeply. Wow, she's really breathing deeply!" And so on and so forth. I chased thoughts around in my head the remainder of the time. When it was time to rise and shake hands, she woke up, looked at me and chuckled and said "already!?" The same time shortened for one, and lengthened for another on the same pew. What was different about this moment of embarrassment was that I stayed with the feeling and tried to understand why I felt embarrassed, and did learn that I have a strong, albeit misplaced at times, sense of responsibility for whatever is taking place. This project readied me to learn to encounter myself and is an excellent illustration of the inclusion of assignments and activities in higher education meant to promote educative encounters with self.

### **Learning from Encountering Self**

"Psychological well-being is closely associated with the kinds of relationships that exist between the different I-positions" (Cooper, 2003, p. 132). It stands to reason that psychological well-being is a necessary pre-condition to caring, and also stands to reason that educative encounters of an I-I nature with 'self' serve to promote such well-being because when a person is able to encounter herself, she is able to encounter others. "A close correlation exists between an individual's attitude towards him or herself, and his or her attitude towards others" (Cooper, 2003, p. 143). Buber agrees, stating that "in order to be able to go out to the other, you must have the starting place, you must have

been, you must be, with yourself” (in Cooper, 2003, p. 143). Cooper and Rowan (1999)

sum this up:

Where there is a lack of communication, where selves disown each other or where one self dominates to the exclusion of all others, then the result tends toward a cacophony of monologues—a discordant wail which will always be less than the sum of the individual parts. But where selves talk to selves, where there is an acceptance and understanding between the different voices and an appreciation of diversity and difference, then there is the potential for working together and co-operation—an interwoven harmony of voices which may transcend the sum of the parts alone. (p. 8 in Cooper, 2003, p. 145)

To learn from encountering self requires firstly awareness and acceptance of all of the various selves that constitutes a self and secondly, understanding, appreciation and co-operation amongst the selves. “If you begin to understand what you are without trying to change it, then what you are undergoes a transformation” (Krishnamurti, n.p.). This is explicit engagement in educative encounters with self when accompanied by space and facilitation regarding reflecting on what has occurred and what may be learned from what has occurred.

### **The Other as an Arena of Educative Encounter**

As is apparent by the previous discussion of self as other, for an educative encounter to happen it must occur between one and an ‘other,’ recognizable through difference. Distance is necessary for this difference to be apparent and is possible between two engaged in an educative encounter because of some distinction. This distinction is least obvious in an educative encounter with self, but the ‘other’ is often more subtle than allowed for when thinking of the term ‘other.’ Where it is perhaps most obvious is when the other is a person; another embodied being with whom one shares many physical similarities and perhaps many other similarities, but nonetheless from whom one is identifiably distinct. In this section, the ‘other’ as other people, is defined,

followed by exploration of how one learns to encounter and learns from encountering these others. The reason for exploring this (and the arenas of self and world) in such a broad manner, encompassing all sorts of possible encounter, is to help understand educative encounters as they occur in various places. This understanding, in turn, highlights actions and dispositions that take an encounter from being a meeting to becoming an educative encounter where learning occurs from the meeting. Identifying actions and dispositions to foster educative encounter helps inform the types of actions and dispositions to be promoted in higher education so that students may be able to educatively encounter the other in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

### **Defining Other**

For the purposes of this discussion, Noddings' (2005) circles of caring are mirrored. Some others are located in inner circles of acquaintance by being intimate others, such as mates, lovers, parents, and then friends and finally neighbors and colleagues. Outside of this inner circle there are others in the forms of strangers. Understanding these circles of others helps the coming discussion of learning to and from encountering these various others.

**Family.** The category of family as 'other' implies a certain level of close intimacy, and yet it is a strange intimacy, for there is the family chosen in the form of life partners and, in a sense, children, and then there is the family not chosen in the form of parents or caregivers and siblings. The intimacy of family that is not chosen is the intimacy of having lived under the same roof for years or of sharing blood ties, but little else. It is possible to live under the same roof and not be intimate in the sense of knowing each other's deepest thoughts and longings, but it is impossible to live together without a

sort of knowing of each other's ways and without forming roles for each family member. It is also possible to share blood ties with another and be practically strangers, and yet there can exist in that blood tie a strong bond. For instance, my sister, Maggie, is 19 years older than me. She no longer lived at home when my parents brought me home from the hospital. We did not grow up together, but later in life as we began to form a friendship, we discovered we shared much in common by fact of having been raised by the same parents.

Family does not, however, always mean blood relative, but rather those others in immediate vicinity with whom life's tasks are shared. This form of family consists of the ones depended upon during the ins and outs of daily living. For instance, there is a proliferation of gangs of aboriginal youth in Winnipeg, Manitoba, primarily attributable to the fact that most northern aboriginal communities in the province of Manitoba do not have high schools, and if the youth of these communities are to be educated they must leave their families and move to Winnipeg, where they create new families for themselves, often in the form of gangs. Whether blood relatives or those chosen or given to stand in for absent blood relatives, this category of other consists of relations that are challenging for educative encounters to occur merely due to familiarity. These are people with whom one interacts with daily, sharing life, but with whom one can do so without educatively encountering the other.

**Life Partners.** Life partners, on the other hand, are unique within the category of family, for this other is with whom one has chosen to bind one's life. Buber identified this relationship as having the richest potential for educative encounter by compelling those in this type of relationship to see an 'other' as indeed other, for it is hard to share in

life together as mates and lovers without being confronted by the realization that this person does indeed view the world differently. A frequently mentioned shared joke between my husband, Jon, and I is that “our favorite color is orange.” “Our” favorite color is not orange. My favorite color is orange. Jon’s is undetermined. We often bring it up as a subtle means of reminder to point out that the other is making a mistaken assumption that what one thinks, the other must think. Some couples seem to answer questions only in the collective, as in “we like to travel” and “we think that...”. There are obviously going to be shared commonalities between two people sharing life, but to blur the line of individuals into one common ‘we’ obliterates the fact that each is an ‘other’ with different views, tastes, ideas, dreams and so forth, demolishing opportunity for educative encounter with this intimate other.

**Friends.** This circle of other is inhabited by many other circles for not all friendships are the same, ranging from dearest to casual friends. Using my own life as an example, I have one best friend other than my husband Jon. Martha is the woman I have known since my first day outside of the womb. We grew up together. From playing Barbies to choreographing dances, from sneaking out to the movies together, to going on high school canoe trips, from summer jobs as bank tellers and canoe rangers, to becoming university roommates and finally, to paddling across the country together, Martha and I have a depth and breadth to our friendship that allows us to anticipate each other’s thoughts, to hear each other’s unspoken words and to share a bond few could match. Outside of this central friendship, there are those lifelong friendships that endure, but are more casual. There is Faith, who I may not see for a year, but with whom the conversation flows as freely as any river when we do get together. And there is my Ph.D.

cohort. Though I am friends with all those in my PhD cohort, it is with Juliann that I have laughed until I cried over a statistics assignment. Different types of friendships lend themselves to different opportunities for educative encounters.

**Neighbors and Colleagues.** This realm of others consists of those with whom one regularly crosses paths and recognizes, but perhaps rarely converses with, or if one does speak to another it is to exchange pleasantries. These people inhabit one's world by being in the same course as us, living on the same street or working in the same department, but are not vital members of one's day to day existence. One may, or may not, choose to acknowledge these others. What makes this category of other unique is that these are people known, but with whom one is not dependent in obvious ways. While these others may not be vital in day to day existence for one, they are vital in their own lives and the lives of others. Part of encountering others educatively is recognizing this vitality of each 'other' encountered.

**Strangers.** Strangers may seem like an overwhelmingly large circle of others, but it does not consist of those within the earth's seven billion plus humans that a person does not know, but those within that seven billion that a person does not know but has contact. This contact can occur in the line at the bank, in the doctor's office, on public transportation and so forth. If you are my in-laws, who live in Parkside, SK, population 125, many days may pass without sharing space with someone unknown, but for most living in cities and towns, urbanization has created shared space with strangers. It is these others with whom the potential for educative encounters exists within the category of strangers.



**Equal and Unequal Relations.** Mention must be given to the difference between equal relations and unequal relations. An equal relation is one between two people that demonstrably have the same level of responsibility and position of power in the relation. Noddings (2005) would say it is an equal responsibility and capability to care for one another that makes the relation equal. It is expected that most of the relationships previously mentioned are equal, especially that of life partners and friends. Other relationships are not equal, such as that between a parent and young child, educator and student or guide and participant, because of power differences based on: the ability to reward (give positive consequences or remove negative consequences); coerce (give negative consequences or remove positive consequences); offer expertise; information the one in power has; reference (others want to be like this person); legitimate position; or, resources available to the one in power (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Even though aspects of the relationship may be equal in certain responsibilities, for one of the reasons listed, the relation is unequal. Relations presumed to be equal are also more aptly a give and take with equality being balanced but times of inequality likely. An unequal relation, such as that between educator and student, does not prohibit educative encounter from occurring but does bring about unique challenges or conditions that resist setting the stage for an educative encounter due to the imbalance in power. Conditions such as moderate inclusiveness and genuine mutuality are difficult, but not impossible, for those in seemingly unequal relations, to achieve. The point, however, of producing an educational theory regarding educative encounters is not that educative encounters necessarily occur between educator and student, rather that the responsibility for

understanding and facilitating learning for educative encounters and fostering conditions for educative encounters be taken up by educators.

### **Learning to Encounter the Other**

**Family.** In the section on learning to encounter self, AIMS projects were mentioned as a way of promoting encounters with self in an academic setting. Through one such project, I learned to encounter not only myself, but my mother as well. For the assignment I set out to engage the thought life of my mom. As a daughter, I have spent much of my life trying to avoid what my mother thinks in order to find my own way. My mom is as unaccustomed to me asking what she thinks as I am unaccustomed to asking, but when I asked her what she thought about education, she overcame her nerves and gave me full and interesting answers to my questions and we were able to move into discourse. At the end of the conversation I heard pride in her voice that I had cared what she thought. We had a rich conversation that would not have continued at a few points because I disagreed with her, and had I let that dictate the direction of conversation my disagreement would have shut the sharing down. Instead of vocalizing my objections, I asked more questions. Mothers and daughters are sometimes a tough dynamic. To learn to encounter those others in the family, one must learn to step outside of well-rehearsed roles, to engage the other in dialogue, to be open to the other and even go beyond accepting that the other has a standpoint of her own to recognizing that though this person may be a close relative, there may be much unknown about this person. Being curious about the unknown is helpful towards fostering educative encounter. In all these arenas of encounter, and seemingly especially in the category of family, there are instances when encounter is not desirable or the ‘other’ not worthy of our openness to

encounter, such as the case of an abusive parent. When educative encounters should not be pursued or are not appropriate will be discussed following the analysis of the three arenas.

Life Partners. Educatively encountering an ‘other’ that is a life partner requires, amongst many other requirements, non-violent communication. This is true in all cases of meeting an ‘other’ educatively, but there is something about the intimacy and demands on this particular relationship that can foster misunderstanding which can lead to violent communication, closing off potential for educative encounters. While there may be times people need to speak out and shout back against harmful rulers and the like, these meetings where violent communication takes place will not lead to educative encounters as defined in this dissertation. In nonviolent communication,

instead of habitual, automatic reactions, our words become conscious responses based firmly on awareness of what we are perceiving, feeling and wanting. We are led to express ourselves with honesty and clarity, while simultaneously paying others a respectful and empathetic attention. (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 3)

This type of communication helps to see others, especially life partners, in a different light and fosters the potential for educative encounter.

Friends, Neighbors or Colleagues. When the other is a friend or a neighbor, interrupting usual patterns of living and going out of one’s way and comfort zone to encounter this other is a key for educative encounters with this other. In referring to usual patterns of living, I am perhaps referring to my own usual patterns, which is to go about life with as few deviations or surprises as possible. I tend not to speak to people I know on a casual basis unless there is something I need to know from them. This *modus operandi* will not facilitate educative encounters and is a loss for both myself and the others. This is because while the connection to friends and neighbors may be routine and

casual, educative encounter is neither. To interrupt usual patterns of living, one should try to see a friend or classmate in a different way, prompting questions about who they are outside of who one knows them to be.

**Strangers.** A brief encounter with a stranger, as related by a friend occurred on a packed subway train in Toronto. Owen was heading home from work, tired after a long day, and he kept nodding off. This was not merely discreet head on the chest nodding off. With the movements of the subway and his total relaxed muscle state, it was head bouncing everywhere nodding off. In fact, his head was getting jerked around so much it would occasionally wake him up. One of the times he was jolted awake he looked up into the eyes of a middle aged black woman sitting across from him, who had obviously been watching him. Instead of retreating with his eyes in embarrassment, he gave her a smile. She smiled back. He chuckled, still holding contact with her eyes. And she laughed, wholeheartedly. He joined in and soon they were both laughing so hard there were tears in their eyes. Then it was his stop. She grabbed his arm as he got up to leave and said “thank you.” This encounter may not have occurred had either one of them given into social norms that prevent us from making eye contact in an urban environment or if either had given into self-consciousness. What demarcates this encounter as educative is that both Owen and the stranger were willing to see the other in this brief exchange and allow that other to infiltrate normal defenses, in that open space they created meeting one another and taking something positive away from the encounter. For Owen, what he took away was a desire to make eye contact with more people with whom he crosses paths on the busy streets of Toronto. When it comes to encounters with strangers, learning to encounter these others occurs by encountering these others and by moving throughout the

day in accordance with the Buddhist principle of 'being awake,' which means being present to the moment at hand rather than distracted by musings of the past or daydreams of the future.

A fine example of a person ready to meet strangers is Rod Appleby, a retired high school educator from the town of Caronport, SK. I coached badminton with Rod and when we would travel for tournaments, I was always impressed with the way Rod would speak to whomever, wherever. One of our badminton players commented on this, telling Rod he had never seen a person talk to as many people he did not know as Rod did. Rod answered that everyone has a story to tell and most are happy to share it. Busyness, lack of interest, and shyness are all barriers to learning other people's stories, but what richness potentially awaits those who engage that mom at the doctor's office or the grocery clerk. As mentioned, there are times when educative encounter is not desirable. In this category it is a case of bad things that await us, such as being taken advantage of, receiving unwanted sales pitches or being robbed. More will be said regarding this concern following the analysis of the arenas.

### **Learning from Encountering the Other**

When one encounters an 'other' educatively, one may be changed in unpredictable manners by the encounter. "The human being who emerges from the act of pure relation that so involves his being has now in his being something more that has grown in him, of which he did not know before and whose origin he is not rightly able to indicate" (Buber in Cooper, 2003, p. 138). For this transformation to occur, others must not only be met, but learning must occur from the meeting. Learning occurs in encounters with others when one is changed by the encounter, through growing in the sense of

expanding who one is, what one knows, how one thinks, and what one feels. Learning from encountering others occurs when the “the capacities of an individual and the stock of a culture become yoked together” (J. R. Martin, 2011, p. 64). The educational agent of this yoking is the meeting that occurs between one and the other.

### **The World as an Arena of Encounter**

This last arena of educative encounter, the world, has the potential to be unwieldy, so again, Noddings’ (2003a) caring categories are used as a model to help narrow and direct conversation regarding others that are not self or other people. The others in the world as an arena of educative encounters will be spoken of in the categories of animals, plants, places, things and ideas. The following sections first define identified categories of this arena then address how one learns to educatively encounter each category, concluded with a discussion of learning from encountering the world.

This entire category of others holds in common that all may be a ‘Thou’ to our ‘I,’ but one may possibly never be an ‘I’ to their ‘Thou’ in that these others do not receive messages in an identifiable manner (Buber, 1958b). In general, though one may speak with one’s very being to a tree, one may never know if or how the tree receives the message, whereas one may understand, because it is one’s own experience, how messages are received from trees and others in this category of world. There are debated exceptions to this generalization. For instance, animals do respond to humans indicating messages are received and that humans are, perhaps, being a ‘Thou’ to their ‘I,’ such as a dog giving one’s face a good lick following heartfelt words directed to it. A caution is warranted in this arena of the world, and that is against anthropomorphism. There is a tendency to see non-human things in human terms when encountering them.

Anthropomorphism, in the context of educative encounters, can interfere with meeting the other as they are, rather than as we see them. If one cannot meet an 'other' as that other is, free of imposed ideas about who, or what, they are, then educative encounters cannot occur.

### **Defining the Categories of the World**

**Animals.** Animals may be others in the form of pets, animals for food and wild animals. A pet is an 'other' that a home is shared with, and for whom people have chosen to be obligated and often upon whom affection is reaped. As I type these words, my dog of nine years, Annie, is lying against me snoring, the picture of a contented dog. A pet, such as Annie, has obvious potential to be a 'Thou' for my 'I' because we receive each other on a regular basis.

Other animals, such as those with instrumental value like cows for dairy or beef, may remain unseen by us. This is for two possible reasons. The first is that the food industry tends to operate at a distance from those living in cities and suburbs in contemporary western civilization, and those non-western civilizations which have industrialized to a sufficient degree. The package of ground beef picked up at the meat deli, or the quart of milk in the cardboard container bear little connection or resemblance to the animal from which it came. This can lead to the existence of many others in the form of instrumental animals with whom the majority of the population, especially in affluent nations, has little to no contact, with the exception of farmers and others who make their living from these instrumental animals. One cannot have an educative encounter with animals one does not meet. The second reason these animals may remain unseen is not because of a physical absence, but because of the difficulty of viewing them

as anything other than objects. Whether cow, chicken or sheep, these others remain 'It' to our 'I,' because something that has instrumental value, or is an instrument, is an object. To have an educative encounter requires opening our eyes to the being that provides the object of value.

The third category of animal that may be an 'other' for us is that of undomesticated or wild animals. These range from the large and rarely encountered, such as wolves to the small commonplace, abundant creatures such as dragonflies.

**Plants.** Plants as others can almost assume the role of neighbors and colleagues in that they are a presence in life, but one that is easy to assign to the background rather than stopping and paying attention to what a plant may be saying. Noddings (2005) distinguishes between care-taking and caring in regards to plants. Care-taking is performing tasks to provide conditions for growth and life in the plant. Caring for a plant is establishing a relation with the plant while care-taking, by perhaps talking to the plant. This distinction applies to those plants for which responsibility is carried in a direct manner, such as the rubber plant I was just given as a gift or those in the garden I just planted. There are many other plants for which responsibility may be assigned, for example in terms of the effects of pollution, but which grow unaided by humans. My parents live on two acres of land, some of which has been landscaped and groomed, including a lawn, flower garden and vegetable garden. The blackberry patch, grand white pine trees and moss on the rocks are part of the plants of their direct lives on those two acres, but ones which a person can easily be immune to noticing. As long as they remain unseen, they remain unencountered, for seeing is a part of understanding and acknowledging the other in a manner required for educative encounter.



**Places.** Places consist of a combination of animals, plants, things, and, according to Gruenewald (2003) dimensions that include (a) the perceptual, (b) the sociological, (c) the ideological, (d) the political, and (e) the ecological (p. 623). As Casey (1997) states:

To be at all-to exist in any way-is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place. Place is as requisite as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand, the bodies we have. We are surrounded by places. We walk over and through them. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them. Nothing we do is unplaced. How could it be otherwise? How could we fail to recognize this primal fact? (p. ix in Gruenewald, 2003, p. 622)

Places belong as an ‘other’, because sometimes it is not just one aspect or dimension, such as one bird, that speaks to a person and becomes a ‘Thou’ for one’s ‘I’, but rather a combination of inhabitants or others making up one place that may be encountered or that may speak to a person.

**Things.** Things consist of inanimate objects in our lives that can range from our most treasured possessions to toilet paper. The very fact that this category consists of inanimate objects is why this category is particularly unlikely to be where educative encounters take place. Most of what is traditionally learned in school involves things, such as the water cycle, solar system, and so forth. This is a category of ‘Its,’ and is a common source of content for education. This does not exclude things, or objects, from becoming subjects. As will be highlighted in the learning to section, however, it does bring about particular challenges. Yet, this category of things is an important realm of educative encounters. While things are often the focus of learning, it is things as objects rather than things as subjects to which we are to relate.

**Ideas.** Intangible, yet influential, ideas operate in the world as others by coming from external sources and being considered in minds and hearts. People engage with ideas. Self-sufficiency is an idea that captivates my husband. Look over his shoulder

when he is doodling, and you will catch glimpse of homes, gardens and possessions drawn in such a manner that if manifested would mean we were living in a self-sufficient manner. People meet ideas in both intentional manners, as when taking a course at a college, and in unintentional ways, such as through marketing and media. It is worth noting that not all ideas are worthy of our attention. Conscious choice ought to be applied in determining those ideas to which we attend. The substance of this part of the world arena, and the object part are typical fodder for higher education settings. What I am proposing is a not a difference in the ideas and objects studied, but a different approach to learning ideas, as will be apparent in the sections to come.

### **Learning to Encounter the World**

**Animals.** When it comes to pets, what helps in fostering educative encounter is recognizing this other as an ‘other.’ Caring for this other can promote this recognition and produce educative encounters with pets. To care as Noddings (2003a) purports requires receptivity. In caring for a pet, this means understanding the pet. Understanding the pet helps in recognizing that this pet is an ‘other.’ While my dog Annie relishes the opportunity to go for a trip in the car, my parent’s dog Daisy trembles the moment she is lifted into a vehicle. Just as recognizing that people are diverse, seeing that one dog is not all dogs helps aid in the recognition of that dog or pet as a subject, center of their own life rather than merely a part of those who share their home with it.

When it comes to instrumental animals, it is a matter of stepping beyond the extrinsic value that this animal has for a person, and considering the intrinsic value. For this to happen requires, firstly, encounters with instrumental animals. An underlying theme in all these sections on learning to educatively encounter the other is that the other

must necessarily be met. This is easier for some categories of others, such as pets, as most people in western homes either have pets or friends that have pets than other categories, such as instrumental animals. A youth in Manhattan may never come face to face with a cow, though he may eat beef weekly. Proximity as a condition of educative encounters is a challenge in the category of instrumental animals. This challenge must be overcome to foster educative encounters with instrumental animals, which can occur, amongst many means, by visiting petting zoos or sourcing one's food to a farm and visiting that farm.

For educative encounters with wild animals, learning to meet this other requires being in places where the meeting may occur and by paying attention. One morning on the cross Canada canoe trip, Martha and I were packing up camp on the North Channel of Lake Huron when I heard a squirrel start chattering away in a very angry tone. I thought to myself that something must have just missed making breakfast out of that squirrel, its' tone was that emphatically chastising. No sooner had I finished the thought when out from the woods, ten feet from me, walks an enormous wolf. He was as surprised to see me as I him. I shouted "hey wolf" and he backed into the forest. Martha wanted to see the wolf as well, so we crouched down to see if we could spot the wolf through the foliage only to see him crouching down to see if we were still there. The point of this story is that people need to pay attention to the sights and sounds around, being ready to be taken by surprise. With wild animals, both large and small, it is a matter of realizing that they are everywhere, even in urban centers, where, for instance, raccoons have learned to thrive. These wild animals are often times watching people, and if humans would quiet down and watch, they would see and encounter.

Beyond paying attention to educatively encounter wild animals, fear must be tempered by appreciation. The Massasauga Rattlesnake provides a great example. It is Ontario's only venomous snake and has long been persecuted for that fact, putting it on the species at risk list. The thought of being bitten by a poisonous snake is terrifying, but the fact is that this is one of the most shy, passive snakes that live in the area of my hometown. Where a water snake may not hesitate to be aggressive, a Massasauga Rattlesnake is most likely to get out of the way, showing its location by rattling a warning only when necessary and striking only under dire threat. Most bites in Ontario happen to young males on their hands. As the snake cannot leap from the ground to bite a person's hand, if one is bitten on the hand, one had to be doing something to put one's hand in reach of the snake's mouth. Having worked for three years as a ranger in a park that is prime rattlesnake habitat, I can attest that this typically happens because a person is harassing a snake. I have personally come across around 17 rattlesnakes in my time living and working in the Georgian Bay area. Once the initial adrenaline subsides, it is incredible to see one of these rare snakes. Though caution is warranted, irrational fear will inhibit an educative encounter from taking place.

**Plants.** Learning to encounter plants requires, first and foremost, plants. So fundamental and obvious it hardly seems to bear mentioning, and yet, more and more young people are growing up in environments devoid of natural life (Louv, 2005). This potentially carries forward to colleges in two ways. First, if students have grown up without access to natural spaces, the existence of them at colleges does little to ensure these students will be equipped to encounter it. Second, are there natural spaces at their school? An obvious remedy is the introduction of plants into homes and trees and green

spaces into campuses, parks and playgrounds. Given the availability of green spaces and plants, learning to encounter flora, the plant life in any area, requires a healthy sense of wonder. Though applicable in the case of all these others that make up the world, Alfred North Whitehead's (1949) book *Aims of Education* in which he writes of the rhythm of learning and three stages that a learner should be taken through, lends itself well to learning to encounter plants. These stages are romance, precision and generalization (Whitehead, 1949). The romance stage of learning is about the wooing; attraction must be sparked in order to engage the learner. Precision is about getting down to business, learning the specifics. Generalization is almost the re-romance – taking learning back to the big picture of context within the world. There can be fear of the unknown and plants, in abundance, can be fearsome. Being romanced to the wonder of plants, leading to learning particulars and finally the broader picture can open a person to encountering plants. Windbound on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, Martha became determined to find the source of the most incredible smell she described as nature's 'obsession' instead of Calvin Klein's popular perfume by the same name. The smell created the question and wonder, wooing Martha unaided by any other. Field guide in hand, she wandered about nose to tree until she located the scent, stemming from a tree that, with the help of the book, she identified as Balsam Poplar, creating an unforgettable educative encounter sparked by a question and pursuit of the answer.

**Places.** Places shape people whether recognized and acknowledged or not. "As centers of experience, places teach us about how the world works and how our lives fit into the spaces we occupy. Further, places make us: As occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and our possibilities are shaped" (Gruenewald,

2003, p. 621). A difficulty in learning to educatively encounter places is seeing what is beyond one's nose. Places are commonplace (Gruenewald, 2003). "We can experience [place] everywhere, everywhere it recedes from consciousness as we become engrossed in our routines" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 622). Exercises that increase awareness of place, helping to combat the dulling effect of routine, range from drawing memory maps (how a place is laid out by memory), listening maps (locations of sounds rather than sights), visiting a landfill site, sitting in one spot and drawing, regardless of artistic ability, the details of what is in front of a person. Awareness and attention are a part of learning how to encounter place, for as Thomas Berry (1988) observed, we "have forgotten how to hear, communicate, and participate in meaning making with our places on the living earth" (in Gruenewald, 2003, p. 624).

**Things.** Learning to encounter things in part includes learning to value things. From a child made to save up her allowance to purchase that desired bike to the young married couple buying their first home, these moments can be moments of achievement. Achievement alone, however, does not insure that one will get beyond viewing the new bike or home as anything more than a thing, though it can contribute.

A thing that I treasure is my XY Meany Original paddle that I have held in my hands while paddling over 9,000 miles. This thing has been changed from a 'stick,' as its maker Don Meany refers to his creations, to a companion, from object to subject because this paddle has been a participant in my canoe journeys. As a bent blade paddle, the form and technique required to use it effectively were new to me when I began paddling across the country. Those first few days of travel with this new paddle made me appear like a drunken canoeist, careening from one shore to the other and back again. As time

progressed, I learned from the paddle and my interactions with the paddle how to hold it and not tire, how to travel in a straight line, and my body began to sing with the joy of this new extension. How did I learn to educatively encounter my paddle? By encountering my paddle – using it, experiencing it, listening to its’ responses to my actions and caring for it.

**Ideas.** To learn to encounter ideas, there must be freedom to explore and be introduced to ideas that have relevance in one’s life. Being able to engage in practices of critical thinking will help in learning to encounter ideas because learning from encountering the world requires critical thinking. According to Paul and Elder (2005), critical thinking is “the art of thinking about thinking while thinking in order to make thinking better” (p. xvii). Analysis and meta-analysis describe thinking about thinking while thinking. Essentially, the idea is that one is able to simultaneously participate as a thinker while stepping back to evaluate one’s thinking. To do this requires the enactment of the intellectual traits of humility, courage, empathy, integrity, perseverance, confidence in reason and autonomy (Paul & Elder, 2005). The results are that a critical thinker:

raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely; gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively; comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards; thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems. (Paul & Elder, 2005, p. xxiii)

A critical thinker is well prepared to learn from encountering the world.

## **Learning from Encountering the World**

Dewey describes the thrill of meeting an acquaintance from home in a foreign land (in McDermott, 1981). Recognition invokes happiness. For me, this lesson was learned on the Saskatchewan River when I realized the import of knowing our natural heritage. When encountering animals and birds I recognize, there is great excitement, much like what Dewey describes as unexpectedly crossing paths with a friend in a large city. Paddling through a wildlife refuge in '99, there were so many colorful ducks that were just that - ducks. When I learned their names, it increased my sense of connection to them. Dewey, however, takes it a step further, saying that recognition alone is insufficient (in McDermott, 1981). We must see and perceive. Instead, "we see without feeling; we hear, but only a second-hand report, second hand because not reinforced by vision. We touch, but the contact remains tangential because it does not fuse with qualities of senses that go below the surface" (Dewey in McDermott, 1981, p. 542). Dewey's sentiments resonate with that of the writer of Ezekiel, in the Old Testament of the Bible, who says "you are living among an uncontrolled people, who have eyes to see but see not, and ears for hearing but they do not give ear; for they are an uncontrolled people" (Ezekiel 12:2, 2002). To learn from encountering the world takes eyes that see and ears that hear.

Even if humans can do nothing with it, a mountain's height and grandeur is admired, and so it should be. Yet, Dewey gives the reminder that "mountain peaks do not float unsupported" (in McDermott, 1981, p. 526). If one can wonder at this piece of earth thrust up towards the sky, jagged and raw, one must also stop and wonder at the earth beneath one's feet too, for there is similarity and continuity between the two! Words other than wonder that Dewey uses are delight, interest, zest, fascination, imagination,



absorption. He says that “the reader [or insert activity of choice, such as learner, hiker, paddler, writer] should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, not by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution, but by the pleasurable activity of the journey itself” (in McDermott, 1981, p. 528). Undertaking pleasurable journeys and having destinations in mind are ways to learn from encountering the world. As Dewey says, “There are two sorts of possible worlds in which esthetic experience would not occur. In a world of mere flux, change would not be cumulative; it would not move toward a close...Equally is it true, however, that a world that is finished, ended, would have no traits of suspense and crisis, and would offer no opportunity for resolution” (in McDermott, 1981, p. 538). Journey and destination are needed for educative encounters. Within these active undertakings, one must not forget to create space for being receptive to what is surrounding one in the midst of a journey or when arriving at a destination, as in the example of being surprised by the wolf. Educative encounters, as mentioned in Chapter Five, require both active and passive modes. Much of this chapter is referencing the active modes that encourage educative encounter, but there are times when it is a matter of receiving an ‘other’ rather than reaching out to an ‘other.’ This act of receiving requires being available and accepting of the other.

Summary Chart of Learning to and from Encounter		
	Learn to Encounter	Learn from Encounter
<b>Self</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discord</li> <li>• internal dialogue</li> <li>• experience one's self</li> <li>• owning facets of self</li> <li>• appreciating the whole</li> <li>• working in the present and particular</li> <li>• engaging the other with one's whole being</li> <li>• being open to the other</li> <li>• descriptive exercises</li> <li>• projective exercises</li> <li>• experiential exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• awareness and acceptance of all the various selves that constitutes a self</li> <li>• understanding, appreciation and co-operation amongst the selves</li> </ul>
<b>Others</b>		
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engage the other</li> <li>• step outside of well-rehearsed roles</li> <li>• recognize there is much we do not know</li> <li>• be curious about the other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• growing in the sense of expanding who we are, what we know, how we think, and what we feel</li> </ul>
Friends, Neighbors & Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interrupt usual patterns of living</li> </ul>	
Strangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overcome embarrassment</li> <li>• ignore social norms that prevent meeting strangers</li> <li>• make eye contact &amp; smile</li> <li>• being awake</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<b>World</b>		
Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition</li> <li>• consideration of intrinsic value</li> <li>• attentiveness</li> <li>• readiness for the unexpected</li> <li>• lack of unreasonable fear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eyes to see</li> <li>• ears to hear</li> <li>• recognition</li> <li>• journey &amp; destination</li> </ul>
Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plants</li> <li>• sense of wonder</li> <li>• romance, precision, generalization</li> </ul>	
Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attentiveness to place</li> <li>• taking in details and expanse through various exercises</li> </ul>	
Things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• valuing the objects in our life</li> <li>• achievement</li> <li>• interaction and listening</li> </ul>	

Ideas	• critical thinking	
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### **Objection**

This chapter has been oriented towards understanding the other that is encountered, and how one learns to encounter the other and learns from encountering the other. What this orientation suggests is that encounters are desirable; in life, including education, effort must be made to promote educative encounters. There are times, however, when an encounter is undesirable and when one should not be open to encountering an ‘other’. The clear answer to when an encounter is not desirable is when it will be a mis-educative encounter, meaning that it will not lead to growth, instead actually shutting down growth. There are also plenty of non-educative encounters that occur in day to day living that are not to be avoided, but do not lead to growth. Mis-educative encounters, however, should be avoided when possible and can include such things, as already mentioned, like being taken advantage of, receiving unwanted sales pitches or being robbed. Less clear is when there is possibility for the encounter to go more than one direction, when it could be educative, non-educative or mis-educative. One of the outcomes of educative encounters is trust in the world, but what about when the world proves untrustworthy? There are contexts where “dispositions to be trusting and honest toward all people...would lead to their own destruction and that of their families” (Schrag, 2009, p. 67). Even encounters with family members may fall into this category of mis-educative encounters; family members may prove to be untrustworthy with another’s wellbeing.

It is easy to say that mis-educative encounters are to be avoided, and most certainly, when someone has immoral intentions, one should not participate in an

encounter with him. The challenge lies in determining ahead of the outcome if an encounter will be mis-educative. Given that outcomes are unpredictable, and what may seem like a potentially terrible situation has potential for good and, conversely, what likely bears good could turn harmful, how is a person to proceed? Open to anything and everything, as it almost seems this chapter suggests, damn the consequences? Or cautious and closed? The answer lies somewhere in between and requires wisdom. Educational philosopher Francis Schrag (2009) gives helpful clarification by noting that not all risks can, nor should be, avoided, rather, care should be taken regarding “*high risks of serious harm*” (p. 64, emphasis in original). Along with skills and dispositions for educative encounters, such as attentiveness and care, skills and dispositions to respond to those with ill intent must be developed (Schrag, 2009). There is, at times, necessity for there to be two sets of “norms and dispositions” ... “a necessary and appropriate accommodation to social reality” (Schrag, 2009, p. 66). This is because of the reality of evil in the world. Noddings (1991) groups evil into three categories: natural evil, cultural evil and moral evil.

Natural evil refers to painful and harmful events that occur naturally, such as disease, earthquakes, storms, and death... Cultural evil includes all the harmful social practices that may be accepted or rejected in different times and places, such as poverty, racism, war, and sexism. Moral evil is the harm we do intentionally or negligently to another person to cause physical or psychic pain. (Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. 242)

Given these evils, there are three tasks necessary in moral education:

Nurturing the disposition to respond appropriately toward those who respect their rights and their autonomy. 2. Nurturing the disposition to respond appropriately toward those who seek to violate their rights and subvert their autonomy. 3. Nurturing the ability to identify which of these categories a person belongs to.” (Schrag, 2009, p. 69)

Though this dissertation is focused on a particular type of meeting that fits in the first task, it does not mean the other tasks do not need to be accomplished, however, at the core of all, hope is necessary.

In pragmatism, hope is based in melioration, essentially “the idea that at least there is a sufficient basis of goodness in life and its conditions so that by thought and earnest effort we may constantly make better things” (Dewey in Shade, 2001, p. 17). To hope pragmatically is to recognize the difficulty of current circumstances and to approach such difficulties with thoughtful action (Shade, 2001), for while meliorism has confidence that our efforts are worthwhile, emphasis on effort must be made<sup>1</sup>. In the case of educative encounter, it is actions that are related to meeting others well.

### **Conclusion**

As should be apparent from this chapter, there are many others with whom there is the potential to have educative encounters. There are ways of learning to encounter these many others and ways of learning to encounter from these many others. Attempt has been made to delineate what is meant by others and to describe learning to encounter others and learning from encountering others. The purpose of this has been twofold: to understand educative encounter in various situations to get to the core of educative encounter, and; to ready the coming discussion as to how such a concept may relate to education and to learning.

Noddings’ (2003a) used a similar approach in considering care. She used the various circles of care to examine how a person is when caring for intimate others, for distant others and for others in the form of pets and ideas. When held up in these various situations, she determined caring is when one-caring meets another in a caring manner by

seeing a need she can meet, acting to meet that need and when the cared-for shows receptivity. This description of caring matters in the current discussion of educative encounters because, while the chart laid out shows some particulars of learning to and from encounters in specific contexts, it is now possible to articulate what educative encounters with others hold in common. One thing that is held in common among all educative encounters with others is care. Caring, as Noddings (2003a) has described, regards a way of meeting others, in fact, asking how it is best to meet others. The particulars change, but the answer is always with care. For an educative encounter to occur, care must be how the other, whether self, family, lover, friend, neighbor, colleague, stranger, animal, plant, thing, idea, or place is met, not because care ensures educative encounter will occur, but because without care it certainly will not. This is what is different about educative encounters than other learning theories, for in many cases, learning can occur without care. I do not dispute this, for there are many types of learning, and as I sit at my computer and type these words, one example that comes to mind is learning word processing. As mentioned earlier, caring, as understood by Noddings (2003a), can occur without learning. In this dissertation, however, I am advocating for a way of learning that is dependent on meeting others, and meeting others in a caring manner. The importance of this point cannot be over-emphasized because one cannot learn directly to have educative encounters, but one can learn to care, amongst other actions that help foster educative encounters as mentioned, such as interrupting usual behavior, being present, and so forth. This informs the coming conversation in Chapter Seven on the implications of educative encounter for the college classroom, where attention is turned towards facilitating such learning in the college classroom.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **EDUCATIVE ENCOUNTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The influence that educators have on the learning experience in a classroom is immense. This influence may be used to construct educative, mis-educative, or non-educative encounters for and with their students. This chapter considers the practical, ‘how to’ implications for using this influence to foster educative encounters, as well as addressing the responsibility that comes with this influence, in the higher education classroom. I have developed the Classroom CARE model to help educators grapple with the implications of the call to increase the quality of the learning experience of students through educative encounter. This model is meant to enable educators, either independently or in collaboration with colleagues and students, to evaluate and assess the current strength of education the educator herself is constructing in her own classroom in accordance with the theory of educative encounters and to identify means to strengthen the potential for educative encounters to occur. In explaining the model, I will also compare and contrast education that offers strong educative encounters with that which does not. A few typical moments in higher education will be analyzed to show how they currently are either mis- or non-educative, in terms of learning from encounter. These examples are provided to aid with understanding that there is room within current approaches to higher education for envisioning improvement through promotion of ideal educative encounters by means of the Classroom CARE model.

The purpose of this chapter is to help educators put into practice the theory of educative encounter that has been constructed in the prior chapters. To review, in a schematic description of encounter, A meets B, in that A performs the act of initiating dialogue, in accordance with meeting, and B recognizes that A is meeting B and responds by participating in dialogic relation with the other. It is educative if the outcome is learning as indicated by growth. Conditions of educative encounter are: close proximal distance between one and an 'other'; a spirit of genuine mutuality; moderate inclusiveness; humility; love; presenting a real depiction of one's self; real mutual action; meaning making; and, confirmation. Dispositions and actions apparent when educative encounter is considered experientially are added to this list of conditions arising from the analysis of the work of Dewey, Buber and Noddings.

To learn to have educative encounters and to learn from educative encounters, a person must first and foremost care for the other being encountered. It is helpful for educative encounters with self for there to be discord, internal dialogue, experience of one's self, owning facets of self, appreciating the whole, working in the present and in the particular, engaging the other with one's whole being, being open to the other through awareness and acceptance of all the various selves that constitutes a self and understanding, appreciation and co-operation amongst the selves. For educative encounters with other people, we must engage the other, step outside of well-rehearsed roles, recognize there is much we do not know about the other, be curious about the other, interrupt usual patterns of living, overcome embarrassment, ignore social norms that prevent meeting strangers, make eye contact, smile, be awake and present to what is around us so that we may grow in the sense of expanding who we are, what we know,



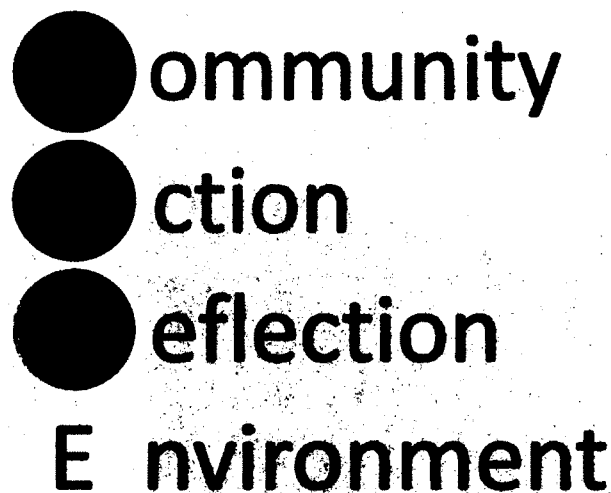
how we think, and what we feel. Educatively encountering the world requires recognition, consideration of intrinsic value, attentiveness, readiness for the unexpected, lack of unreasonable fear, actual 'others' in the form of plants and animals, sense of wonder, taking in details and expanse through various exercises valuing the objects in our life, achievement, interaction, critical thinking, eyes that see, ears that hear, recognition, and both journey and destination. While this might seem like an overwhelming number of conditions, attitudes and actions to achieve educative encounters, what follows is a model that helps encapsulate possible means to the achievement of educative encounters in higher education.

### **Classroom CARE Model**

I have developed the Classroom CARE model for the purpose of enabling educators to assess and implement teaching practices that foster educative encounters. By developing CARE (Community through Action and Reflection in a welcoming Environment), an educator can promote educative encounters in the classroom.

This model can act as an assessment tool and an implementation tool. It is also an expression of what I hold as some integral aims of education:

education that results in students that care in community, are active and reflective learners connected to their surrounding environment, able to shape welcoming places



**ommunity**  
**ction**  
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where they live and work. What follows is a discussion of each aspect of the model as both assessment and implementation tool. When it comes to implementation, I have provided examples and suggestions meant to serve as starters to encourage thinking along the lines of incorporating the Classroom CARE model into an educator's pedagogy. I have, by no means, provided, in what follows, an exhaustive tome on how to live out the model for that depends on the educator, the students and the subject being taught.

Choosing the acronym CARE was deliberate, for developing community in an active and reflective classroom that is a welcoming environment depends first and foremost on care as conceived by Noddings (2003a), which is understood such that "A cares for B – that is, A's consciousness is characterized by attention and motivational displacement, and A performs some act in accordance with [care], and B recognizes that A cares for B" (N. Noddings, 2002b, p. 19). Not only is the educator meant to care for her students in this manner, but to encourage such care to be lived out by all in the classroom. Noddings suggests teaching students to be the one-caring and the cared-for through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation (2003a). In every caring encounter the educator is not only meeting the other but sharing with that other how to care, which is modeling care. Dialogue is meant to promote connection and care, establishing relationships. Students must be given the opportunity to practice care in the classroom and be confirmed, in the sense that the educator communicates a vision of each student's best self to the student and others in the classroom. Based on this understanding that a classroom meant to foster educative encounters is caring and teaches caring, the CARE model may now be discussed.

## **Community**

Learning to and through encounter would be nearly unfeasible in a classroom without community. Building community in a classroom helps create opportunity to develop conditions of educative encounter such as proximity, separation, genuine mutuality, moderate inclusiveness, being real, mutual action and confirmation. As Dewey states, we must “make each one of our schools an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society and permeated with the spirit of art, history, and science” (2001, p. 20). This section of the model refers to three types of community: the community that is within the classroom whose others includes the educator, students and the setting and subject matter; the community that is a part of the students’ lives outside of the classroom; and, the community within which the school, and subsequently classroom, is situated in. In higher education many students physically leave their own communities to attend college while retaining ties to ‘home’, this community therefore being different from the community within which the college is located. A discussion of building community in each area follows.

### **Building Classroom Community**

An all too common experience in the college classroom is that of showing up as a student, notebook or computer at the ready for note-taking, listening to a lecture and leaving. The student will know the professor’s name. The professor may or may not know the student’s name. The more gregarious members of the class may strike up conversation with those seated near them, but there is no necessity for interaction with other classmates. Grades are determined, in many cases, via multiple choice exams and term papers, for ease of grading. This description of a typical college classroom depicts a

good portion of the courses in my own undergraduate education. The underlying message in courses like this is that the identity and background of each student has no bearing on the course content, delivery or learning. No relationship is necessary for learning to occur. Class occurs, but there is a lack of meeting, or a non-meeting amongst all the others in the class, with no prospect of an educative experience. A classroom ripe for educative encounter, however, is one that not only values, but actually depends on, community for learning. A college classroom that is also a community is one where students know one another and the instructor and are able to make friends with one another's minds, so to speak, for this community is based on friendship with the purpose of learning.

An educator is not just a facilitator of knowledge, but also the one with initial responsibilities for building community in the classroom. As an educator, to consider readiness to build a classroom community, ask the following questions:

- What is it like to be a student learning something of significance?
- Do I dare let myself deal with this student as a person, as someone I respect?
- Do I dare recognize that he may know more than I do in certain areas – or may in general be more gifted than I?
- What are the things that excite each student, and how can I find out?
- How can I preserve and unleash curiosity?
- Do I have tolerance and humanity to accept annoying, occasionally defiant, oddball questions of those with creative ideas?
- Can I help the students develop a feeling of life as well as a cognitive life? (Rogers, 1983, pp. 137-142 in Knapp, 1992, p. 108)

These questions point in directions that an educator of a classroom of higher education oriented towards educative encounter needs to be willing to go. An educator that will build community ready for educative encounters is an educator who is ready to guide significant learning, respect each student as a unique person, grant that students have talents and knowledge that may exceed her own, be prepared to tap into the curiosity and

excitement of students, able to accept and help flourish those students that are difficult and deal with the student as a whole, not just as a mind. It requires the condition of humility.

Building one's self as an educator is the beginning of building a community in the classroom. Most teaching centers on who the educator is rather than what the educator knows (Kottler, Zehm, & Kottler, 2005; Mitchell & Weber, 1998). Self-identity must be a part of how an educator approaches the classroom (Palmer, 1998). For example, as a woman, I place high value and emphasis on the relational aspect of teaching and I nurture my students. As a Christian I view each student as a child of God, created with unique purposes and abilities, carrying within the spark of the Divine, and I receive them as such. As a paddler and adventurer, I value risk and, therefore, ask and expect my students to take risks in the classroom. These are glimpses of how who I am has bearing on my teaching. An educator ready to engage in community is able to understand who she is and how that influences the classroom.

There are many ways to build community in a classroom. While I suggest means that I find useful, what is important is that educators find ways to build community that suits their personality and the needs of their courses. Many of the suggestions presented here are those I have found to work in my own teaching practice, but this inherently limits the suggestions. An educator must consider his own situation and how these suggestions may relate. For building community, I have relied on Project Adventure's sequencing of the adventure experience, or in my case, classroom experience. Sequencing can be understood as "paying attention to the order of activities so that the order is appropriate to the needs of the group" (Schoel, Prouty, and Radcliffe, 1988 in Bisson,

1999, p. 35). The sequencing for group formation suggested by Project Adventure is as follows:

- Icebreaker and acquaintance activities
- De-inhibitizer activities
- Trust and empathy activities
- Communication
- Decision making and problem solving
- Social responsibility
- Personal responsibility (Bisson, 1999, p. 33)

While formulaic in presentation, flexibility is essential. One sequence is not necessarily appropriate for it does not fit all groups, though this particular sequence is a useful guide for forming community.

The sequence begins with activities meant to share names. It can be as simple as a ‘name whip’, which is going around the room quickly to hear names, perhaps repeating the process until names are learned by at least a few members of the class. A directive may be given such as sharing your name and something that gives you joy. Various name games may be relied upon as well. In a large classroom, expecting everyone to know everyone else’s names is unreasonable, however, splitting into groups to learn names will at least breed familiarity amongst some members, creating a community feel when it is not possible for all students to learn everyone else’s names. What matters is that an effort is made by the educator to learn her students’ names and that an effort is made to promote students learning one another’s names, for this indicates that the identity of each student is important.

De-inhibitizer activities are those meant to increase students’ comfort zones in the classroom. In my experience, when a class can laugh together or be goofy together, there is opportunity to do great things together. Something as simple as a ‘rock/paper/scissors

world championship' (where students are paired off to determine a winner through playing rock/paper/scissors, with the winner progressing to play another winner, and the loser becoming the winner's biggest fan by standing behind their winner and chanting their name until it is down to two people in the class)<sup>ii</sup> can get students up and moving, meeting one another, engaged in unusual classroom behavior (yelling) and laughing. To an outsider glancing into the classroom, activities such as this may seem like a waste of time, but I have found that a group that is formed as a community rather than a roomful of unconnected individuals is potentially more apt to go deeper in discussion and further with their learning. Laughter and fun are foundational building blocks for such connections.

Trust and empathy activities help build connections and familiarity within the group. While in an adventure setting, these activities are often along the lines of trust falls, where participants learn to physically trust one another, in the classroom, I have chosen to create time and space for personal sharing as related to content to build trust and empathy. In a teacher educator education course, I may rely on metaphors by bringing in a wide selection of pictures, cut from magazines and laminated, to spark sharing. I ask students to choose a picture that reflects their best educational experience or their worst or a picture that represents what they think is the most important thing they personally have to offer as an educator or even one that represents their definition of education. This encourages reflection related to the topic at hand and builds trust through sharing. I use these pictures almost every class for the first couple of weeks, initially asking students to share their answers in small groups and eventually asking for some volunteers to share with the larger group and then finally asking everyone to share their

answer. This is one example of many ways to build trust and empathy in a classroom. The means matter less than the outcomes. In the case of the metaphor/picture exercises, the outcomes are potentially that students understand that the stories of their lives matter to what is being learned, that they all have something to say and that the classroom is a welcoming place to speak up.

Communication is the verbal and non-verbal basis for all human interaction and for all group functioning. It provides opportunity for groups to understand one another, build trust, coordinate their actions, plan strategies for a goal accomplishment, agree upon a division of labor, and conduct all of a group's activity. It is effective when the receiver interprets the sender's message in the same way the sender intended it (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). The point of this next step of communication in the Project Adventure sequence is to encourage students to be responsible and effective in their communication.

[Communication activities] provide an opportunity for group members to enhance their ability and skill to communicate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors more appropriately through activities which emphasize listening, verbal, and physical skills in the group decision-making process. (Schoel, Prouty, and Radcliffe, 1988, p. 69 in Bisson, 1999, p. 208)

I have participated in classes where a lesson was included on non-violent communication and where students were asked to come up with a list of what makes groups effective, including what makes for good communication. A micro lesson on the basics of communication may prove helpful. In teaching, I have relied on improvisation exercises to help students work on both sending and receiving messages and used the book *'Joining Together'* by Johnson and Johnson (1991), with a chapter focused on communication and activities that work on observation and understanding of the self as a communicator. These steps of acquaintance, de-inhibitzer, trust and empathy, and communication are all



preparation so that students may learn to work well together in a cohesive manner before being required to do so in more complex tasks.

Decision making and problem solving are the next step in Project Adventure's sequence. What I appreciate about these activities being placed in sequence is that it highlights that students may be ill prepared for decision making and problem solving as a community if these activities are not done in sequence. Dewey promotes education based on the process of scientific inquiry, which involves both decision making and problem solving. A classroom ready for educative encounter is a classroom that will face questions and problems generated by students and proceed to figure out solutions.

Social responsibility refers to engagement with one another "to develop skill in assessing and working effectively with the strengths and weaknesses of individuals in a group" (Schoel, Prouty, and Radcliffe, 1988, p. 72 in Bisson, 1999, p. 209). In the middle of a semester after time has been made for students to progress through the prior steps in Project Adventure's sequence, I require group presentations on topics related to course material. In 'Alternative Perspectives in Education', this means dividing the class into groups for each chapter of Dewey's book *'Experience and Education'* for presentations. Not only do students work together on a presentation, but, in collaboration with me, they offer feedback to each of the other groups.

"The objective of [personal responsibility] activities is to present challenges that will develop persistence, determination, and self-confidence in each participant" (Schoel, et al, p. 209 in Bisson, 1999, p. 36). This stage of group formation asks members of the group to grow personally in connection and with help from other group members. In each course, I ensure that there is opportunity for the challenge of personally leading the class.

This can be done through writings that are shared or through presentations that are individual. A capstone project for educator education students is preparing a teaching philosophy and then presenting this philosophy to the class in an engaging manner. Though there is much time for peer involvement in the process, there is demand for the students to each take the stage, so to speak, and present on their own an expression of their learning. When community is formed relying on sequencing such as what has been shared from Project Adventure, space has been created to support such individual efforts. However an educator may approach the development of community, what matters is that it is approached. Classroom community is the backbone of educative encounter in higher education. When well built, it will help promote actions and dispositions that foster educative encounter such as: engaging the other with one's whole being; being open and engaging with the other; recognizing there is much we do not know about the other; being curious about the other; interrupting usual patterns of living; overcoming embarrassment; ignoring social norms that prevent meeting; making eye contact; being awake and present; interaction and listening; growing in the sense of expanding who we are, what we know, how we think, and what we feel.

### **Connecting to Students' Communities**

To be in accordance with the theory of educative encounter, learning must be relevant to the life of the learner because an insular classroom with no connection to the world beyond the four walls of the classroom will diminish rather than encourage educative encounter. Who the student is matters to the classroom community, and the student is a reflection of her community outside of the classroom. Typically, as shared above in classroom community, the identity of a student has little bearing on what takes

place in the classroom and, conversely, little to no effort is made to connect the classroom to the lives of the students. A classroom formed for educative encounter, however, will go beyond the four walls of the classroom to connect with, and potentially influence, others with who the students are in community.

Educators must, therefore, consider the relevance and connection of learning to students' communities beyond the classroom. What does relevant mean? It means that what is done in the classroom matters to what is done outside of the classroom (Ham, 1993). It is also content that is meaningful. What, then, does meaningful mean? It entails being able to connect what we are learning with something already inside our brains (Ham, 1993). Meaningful learning is produced by an educator that respects continuity and works with the prior experiences and knowledge of the student. Context matters, especially the context of the students' lives. So how can learning be meaningful and relevant? To make it meaningful avoid technical terms unless necessary and/or bridge the unfamiliar with experiences your students are likely to have had (Ham, 1993). Examples help bridge between what is known and has been done and what is being presented by quickly referring to something or someone that is like or in some way represents that kind of thing or person you are talking about. Analogies show many similarities of the thing you are talking about to some other thing that is highly familiar to the audience (Ham, 1993). Comparisons show a few of the major similarities and/or differences between the thing you are talking about and something which can be related to it. There are two special kinds of comparisons: similes and metaphors. Similes compare some characteristic of two things using the words 'like' or 'as'. Metaphors describe something with a word or phrase usually used to describe something very different. Sometimes, as

an educator, I provide the comparison, but I find the outcome is stronger when the students provide the comparison.

Beyond being relevant by being meaningful, educators may connect students' communities with the classroom by creating activities and assignments that invite such connection. A reflective paper I ask my students to write requires them to consider an educator that made a difference in their education and how this difference was made. They are then encouraged to see this assignment as not only homework, but as an opportunity to say thank you by sharing this reflective paper with that educator. Another reflective paper assigns the task of interviewing three different people known to the student regarding how they define education. This assignment results in students having conversations with roommates, partners and family about a topic that is at the center of a course they are taking. The point, again, is not how this connection is done, but that students somehow connect their own community with their classroom community, furthering the potential of actions and dispositions of educative encounters to be enacted, such as interrupting usual patterns of behavior. In part, this aids with seeing those others in their own communities in different lights, promoting educative encounters beyond the classroom, but through the classroom.

### **Connecting to the Community at Large**

Higher education, as mentioned, could be accused of being insular in the sense of being isolated from the surrounding community. This insularity leads way to contrasts between school life and real life. As Dewey strongly promoted, however, education was never meant to be something other than real life, nor was it only meant for future rewards, rather education was meant to be presently rewarding and connected to life

outside of the classroom. Many programs in higher education attempt to make these connections with varying degrees of success through internships, field experiences and practicums. These are important components of education that do potentially connect students to the community at large. There are still, however, a plethora of courses that students take that never require students to interact with the community at large, except in theory. What I want to address in this section is incorporating community connections into courses on a smaller scale so that in some way students are given the opportunity for community building in each course. Rather than one course meant to give practical experience or an extra-curricular requirement meant to teach service within community, I suggest that for educative encounters to occur, higher education classrooms must attempt to connect each course with the community by going public with the learning in some manner.

Service learning is one means to overcoming the distance between the classroom and the community. “Service learning is classroom based, but involves an experiential component, usually volunteer work, that ties in with the in-class curriculum” (Lee, 1997, p. 2). First, community needs and problems must be identified, preferably by the students, followed by an action plan to engage students in experiences to help meet those needs and solve problems under the guidance of faculty to connect the experiences to course curriculum. Piedmont Virginia Community College provides an excellent example of different disciplines connecting with community outside of the classroom. Some examples of projects undertaken by the college include:

helping local high school art students prepare a summer exhibit at the PVCC gallery; offering advanced accounting students as tax consultants for members of the community; creating a nature trail on campus as part of a biology class project; having philosophy students introduce the concept of critical thinking to local third-graders through a series of summer workshops. (Lee, 1997, p. 3)

What is so excellent about this Piedmont Virginia Community College example is that it demonstrates the possibilities for different disciplines to connect students, curriculum and community. Earlier in this dissertation the example was given of the 'Science in Society' class that helped their community on the path to finding a geographically appropriate waste management site providing another example of learning connected to community. In courses I have taught, I also seek to find a way for students to connect with the community. In a programming class, students run programs for the community, ranging from a kid's climbing club to a camp conference. In my business class, students run businesses, such as a fundraising company. In a health and wellness class, students paired with a community member as a fitness partner. The means to bridging the gap between the classroom and the community at large are endless, but what is required is a commitment to community from the school and educator, passed on enthusiastically to the student. The outcome, in regards to educative encounter is that students are led to learn how to encounter others beyond the intimate circle of family, partners and friends.

Other suggestions for connecting to the community at large include bringing the community to the classroom (Patterson & Horwood, 1995). The value of what community members have to share with students is not to be underestimated. There are many more ways for students to meet community members than in a guest lecture format. A biology course field trip could include local biologists. Students could work in partnership with external organizations, such as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. In

whatever manner the community is invited into the classroom, the purpose remains to help foster educative encounters with others. Connecting with the community at large can help open students' eyes and ears to what is around them that matters, both intrinsically and to their learning.

### **Action**

For educative encounters to occur, the intellectual, physical and emotional senses must be engaged. As it has been noted in an earlier chapter, in an educative encounter participants must be both active and passive in the meeting of the other. Mutual action is a necessary condition of educative encounter. If there is little to no action, or if action is limited to one mode (intellectual over physical and emotional), there is no space for mutual action to occur. If all who are involved in the encounter are entirely passive (or entirely active), the encounter may fail to be educative (Webb, 1992). Students must be active to have educative encounters. A classroom that is conducted in an active manner, engaging the head, heart and hands of students in participatory manner will be more likely to foster educative encounters.

While a typical college classroom is not entirely passive, there is a hierarchy of modes of learning, emphasizing active minds over active hearts and bodies. This emphasis on active minds may lead to mis-educative encounters by shutting down growth in emotional and physical capacities. Much like overdeveloping one muscle while others are allowed to atrophy, this leads to imbalance. Education oriented towards educative encounter will help overcome this imbalance by fostering learning through intellectual, emotional and physical modes.

The conceptual mode of learning, which relies on language and features "learning 'about' a subject, making statements and propositions" (Postle, 1993, p. 33), is often

noticeably placed at the top of the hierarchy. Minds are, therefore, the center of learning and are expected to actively engage with the material at hand. Even if education is occurring in lecture style format with the students passively receiving information, there is likely an expectation of their engagement on an intellectual level through various means including homework assignments. Though rightly associated with the mind, modes of learning centered on imagination, expressed “though envisioning and devising possible processes and situations as a whole” (Postle, 1993, p. 33), perhaps fall behind conceptual modes of learning in the hierarchy for a variety of explanations such as time constraints or classroom numbers as this mode of learning requires more of the students and educator.

Affective modes of learning, engaging the heart or emotions through “immersion in the experience” (Postle, 1993) fall below the mind in the hierarchy as they may or may not be engaged. Some subjects are gripping, some will hit home with certain students while others may be hard pressed to ignite the passions of students, the point being that higher education is not usually conducted in such a manner as to arouse subjective or ‘feeling’ responses in students. What is typically emphasized is the objective, reasoned response to the learning at hand, though at times the heart may become involved in what is being learnt.

Bodies characteristically come last as is evident in the physical arrangement of classrooms, with rows of desks to hold the body while the mind gets to work with little room left over in the physical space of the classroom for getting up and moving about. Physical modes of learning need not be excluded from the higher education classroom. An educative encounter oriented classroom is one that will engage all aspects of a person



by equitably including all of these modes of learning. In what follows, I suggest ways that students can actively be engaged in learning under the categories of head (conceptual and imaginal), heart (affective) and hands (practical) for the purposes of fostering educative encounters, and ultimately, learning through relationship for growth.

### **Head: Using Intellectual Modes in Learning**

There are many ways to approach the question of how to have an active mind in education. In the case of an active mind in the classroom for the purposes of fostering educative encounter, I remind the reader of earlier discussed approaches to the classroom, specifically Dewey's scientific inquiry. Inquiry, according to Dewey, is "the directed or controlled transformation of an indeterminate situation into a determinately unified one" (1981, p. 237). Furthermore, "the process of inquiry entails deliberation; ... an experimental practice of investigating which combinations of habits, impulses, and objective environs produce viable actions for addressing and alleviating the problem" (Stitzlein, 2008, p. 89). Having a genuine problem or an indeterminate situation, as produced or stumbled upon or identified by the students, is the beginning of the process of inquiry. Giving space and time for exploration to produce such problems to be faced with inquiry must be the start of a course that is to promote active minds. This will result in students having responsibility for their learning from the start, as well as being engaged with their imaginations and able to direct their learning, guided by the educator who promotes critical thinking; learning that is akin to a journey with a destination.

### **Heart: Using Emotional Modes in Learning**

It is arguable that emotions play a vital role in learning. Emotions strengthen the intellectual according to existential psychologist Rollo May, who stated that "we cannot

really see an object unless we have some emotional involvement with it” (1976 in Webb, 1992, p. 11). Emotional involvement is a necessity given that seeing, in the sense of taking notice, is such an important means to encounter. In fact,

if education fails to take account of the need to recognize the primacy of human feeling – both to stimulate us to an awareness of our feeling and to stimulate us to new awareness *through* feeling – then the effect upon the individual can lead only to a diminution of what David Holbrook so appropriately called ‘powers of being’ [including openness and receptivity]. (Webb, 1992, p. 70)

Openness and receptivity, like seeing, are essential to fostering educative encounters.

How then do educators include emotional senses in learning?

Students must care about what is being shared, creating a personal connection with what is being taught and done in the classroom. Highly personal things include our self, our families, our health, our well-being, our quality of life, our deepest values, principles, beliefs and convictions. As an educator, a key in helping students be active in their affective realm is trying to connect ideas to the lives of students. People have selective attention. Just like when you are at a crowded house party and, over all the noise and conversations, will hear your name being used, if it matters to you or connects with you, you will listen. Educators can help students listen through knowing their students and through such simple tactics as self-referencing to help make the classroom personal. The task of knowing one’s students can be daunting, especially when faced with a classroom of 50 or more students. As a start to this, I have students fill out personal information sheets that include qualitative questions regarding experience and hopes for the course to provide me with information to help personalize the learning. Self-referencing means getting students to think momentarily about themselves by using the word ‘you’, such as: ‘think of the last time you...’; ‘have you ever...’; ‘how many of

you have ever...'; or 'at one time or another most of us have....' (Ham, 1993). The point is that the students must be able to locate themselves in the learning at hand, and when they can, they will be more emotionally engaged.

### **Hands: Using Physical Modes in Learning**

This mode of encountering matters greatly. Students have bodies, bodies that are meant for more than carrying around their minds, and yet this is how the body has often been viewed in western civilization since ancient times. "The Greeks, by dichotomizing the world of material and practical experience from the metaphysical mind started a western philosophical tradition of 'even greater intellectualism' (Dewey in McDermott, 1981, p. 267) of experience as carried forward by such figures as Locke and Descartes" (Roberts, 2008, p. 20). Descartes distinguishes between mind and body. The sway this 'Cartesian dualism' has on learning is a separation of self into discrete components where the body and the soul are simply not engaged in learning. As Jane Roland Martin points out, "the presence in the school curriculum of a subject called *physical* education is mute testimony to the existence of the deep structure's mind/body split. Why would one particular curriculum subject bear the label 'physical' education if every subject were thought to educate both minds and bodies?" (2011, p. 55).

When I think of trying to engage the physical senses of my students in learning, I ask how it is that we can do what it is we are learning. The answers do not always come easy, but it is feasible to get students up and moving around, engaged in learning in a hands-on manner for almost any subject. I have relied on improvisation games as one means for getting active, turning the game into a metaphor for what is to be learned. I also tap into the plethora of ideas available for activities for educators. For instance, in an

‘Aboriginal Issues’ course I used a book based on activities that promote native culture and are used to help rediscover native beliefs and customs at aboriginal camps. Caution is warranted, however, lest active bodies be mistaken to mean that minds and hearts are necessarily active. Caution is also warranted lest being active in any mode, perhaps particularly the physical mode, become mis-educative in the sense of being useless, disconnected and not cumulative. Getting students up and moving around is insufficient for educative encounter. They are active, but not actively learning. The challenge is to connect every action in the classroom to the learning at hand. The next aspect of the Classroom CARE model, reflection, helps ensure that what is being done to use the head, heart and hands to encounter a subject is, indeed, resulting in learning in accordance with the theory of educative encounter.

The point of including Action as part of the Classroom CARE model is that students encounter with their whole being and so their whole being should be engaged in learning. Two final suggestions for meeting the criteria for active heads, hearts and hands are being attentive to the rhythm of learning and including more adventure in the classroom.

### **Concluding Action**

Alfred North Whitehead (1949) shares the rhythm of learning in his book *Aims of Education* by delineating three stages of presenting a subject to students. According to Whitehead, as mentioned previously in Chapter Six, there are three stages of learning: romance, precision and generalization (1949). The romance stage of learning is about wooing; attraction must be sparked in order to engage the learner. Precision is about getting down to business, learning the specifics. Generalization is almost re-romance –

taking learning back to the big picture of context within the world. While all of the senses, intellectual, emotional and physical, may be engaged at any stage, I suggest that the romance stage targets the affective, the precision stage targets the intellectual and the generalization should engage the physical. Using his stages helps an educator give equality to the various modes of learning, rather than emphasizing one over the others.

A second means to active minds, as well as active hearts and hands, is through learning in an adventurous manner. I agree with Horwood when he states that “what is essential is the wholehearted, wide-eyed spirit of adventure in both educators and students who, together, seek to do their utmost with hands, heads and hearts.” (1999, p. 12). Indicative aspects of adventure include: uncertain outcomes with no absolute guarantees of how things will work out; presence of risk, whether physical, social, psychological or spiritual; inescapable consequences to ensure that an adventure is not totally amenable to skilled control; energetic action meaning making extraordinary effort, to stretch and to dig deeply into resources of strength and will; and willing participation, meaning more than consent, but enthusiastic pleasure (Horwood, 1999). Some suggestions for incorporating adventure in schooling are: varying the sequence of instruction so that students may begin with experimentation and problem identifying and solving; diversity in locale and method; distribution of decision making so that all in the classroom are responsible for what takes place; increasing the degree of public exposure – the more public, the more adventurous, and; various modes of evaluation beyond the typical exam and term paper modality (Horwood, 1999). I have presented this idea of inclusion of adventure in the classroom as a means to begin the dialogue for forming a social contract about how a particular course can be adventurous. Any course is an

opportunity for students and educator to adventure together so that the subject at hand is not only read, heard and written about, but done, seen and reflected upon as well. Taking an adventurous approach to learning helps activate head, heart and hands which in turn helps mutual action to occur, as well as genuine mutuality and actively engaging the other with one's whole being.

### **Reflection**

Learning is dependent on integrating experience with reflective practices (Sugarman, Doherty, Garvey, & Gass, 2000). The process of reflection is that of reorganizing perceptions, forming new relationships and influencing future thoughts and actions. The outcome of this process is meaning making, a necessary part of educative encounter. As Aldous Huxley said, "experience is not what happens to people, but what people do with what happens to them. Reflection is an essential part of the learning process because it can result in extracting meaning from experience". Take away reflection and the individual is left with a series of experiences that are unconnected and ineffective in changing how he or she learns about the world. Great care should be given to consciously incorporate reflection into teaching and to make the reflection activities varied and successful for participants to avoid rendering classroom experiences and encounters useless, disconnected and not cumulative, or in a word, mis-educative. Reflection as a classroom practice may follow activities or lessons, but is also to be promoted during activities and lessons to assist in providing useful, connected and cumulative lessons that foster educative encounter.

One of the primary means to reflection is through questioning. An educator must learn to ask appropriate questions. As Alvin Toffler said, "I came to appreciate that the

right question is usually more important than the right answers to the wrong question” (in Knapp, 1992, p. 53). Reflective questions are designed to encourage students to consider: observations (facts & concepts); anticipation (rules or theories to account for these concepts); action to provoke reaction or problem solve (methods for deriving rules or theories in general) (Knapp, 1992).

Good questioning begins with good listening. What is said is only one piece of a puzzle. An educator must hear what her students say (and, as a perquisite, create space for students to speak). An educator must also probe with questions to help students self-correct and make connections instead of depending on the educator for indicators as to correct or mistaken ideas. This aids students in reflecting and teaches the students how to ask questions and learn to reflect on their own as well. I recommend relying on variations of the questions of ‘what?’, ‘so what?’, and ‘now what?’ (Sugarman et al., 2000). The first ensures that there is clarity regarding what has taken place, or what information has been shared. The second promotes discussion of relevance and the final directs attention to the future regarding next steps and action to be taken based on what has occurred and what it has meant. Taking students through these types of questions will help them process the experience, strengthening the learning. I have done this both during class through discussion, and at the end of each class by leaving time for students to fill out a learning log that invites their reflection on the class and readings and serves as a tool of dialogue between myself and each student. This is not to say, however, that reflection happens only under an educator’s guidance nor only after action has occurred. Students are capable of reflecting on their own and will do so. Often educator led reflection helps strengthen personal reflection and creates shared understanding. Also, reflection can

occur simultaneously with action, in that as something is being experienced it is also being analyzed and considered. In whatever manner it occurs reflection is an essential part of learning in accordance with the theory of educative encounter, for it helps one appreciate the whole and dialogue with one's self.

### **Environment**

This aspect of the model refers to two environments that matter for learning in accordance with educative encounter: the classroom environment and the external environment. These environments are significant in very different ways for learning. The classroom environment has negative, neutral or positive bearing on learning. A hostile learning environment will mis-educatively shut down attempts to foster educative encounter whereas a welcoming space invites opportunity for educative encounters. A hostile learning environment may present itself in many different ways. When an educator is intimidating by being unapproachable or sharing their knowledge in an inaccessible manner, or is just plain unreceptive to the students, this may have an adverse effect on learning and be mis-educative. A welcoming space, on the other hand, is where students can be at ease and learn through educative encounters. The external environment can carry weight in learning by stepping outside of the four walls of the classroom, which may serve to excite students, be a healthier place for learning, promote a sense of wonder and perhaps serve as a conduit for educative encounters with the world.

### **Classroom Environment**

Imagine that each class conducted in higher education is akin to hosting a large dinner party. Guests include the heterogeneous group of students, the subject matter, and the educator. Ultimately, when it comes to a dinner party or to the classroom environment



and educative encounter, the means to success is a relaxed, happy atmosphere conducive to guests connecting with one another, the material to be learned and with the educator, potentially having a sense of how to connect with others in settings beyond this dinner party. This concept of hosting a dinner party captures what is intended in asking educators to consider the classroom environment, leading us to ask ‘how do I conceive of this dinner party?’ and ‘how do I hold and shape this dinner party?’. When it comes to envisioning a classroom set for educative encounter, the picture includes visions of laughter, excitement, engagement, satisfaction gained from conversation, participants’ eyes being opened to new ideas and new people and a high level of energy from all involved. Holding and shaping this classroom entails welcoming students as vital guests, being gracious and warm and understanding of the awkwardness that sometimes ensues from new situations and new people meeting, ready to hold forth through the awkwardness to reach a place of comfort and learning.

An example of a means for facilitating connections between students and subject occurred in my ‘Alternative Perspectives on Education course’. At the beginning of the semester I give my students the task of matching philosophers’ pictures with their names. This activity serves as an initial meet and greet, helping to begin conversations between my students and this tome of philosophers, for they are intended to meet these philosophers and engage with them rather than it be a one-sided conversation as they read the words of others. It helps that I am excited about all of the guests at the table, the students and the philosophers, and I cannot wait for them to get to know one another. What matters is not how a classroom is conducted, but whether it results in a learning

environment that is welcoming to help with conditions of educative encounter such as being real and recognizing that there is much we do not know about the other.

### **External Environment**

The external environment is intended to be broadly understood and includes places, animals, plants, things and ideas. It is meant to include the community at large within which the college is situated, but to be more broadly understood to include places, animals, plants, things and ideas beyond that community. Just as in connecting to the community at large, when linking students with external environments there are two primary means of doing so: bringing the external environment to the classroom and bringing the class to an external environment. One straightforward way to bring the external environment, especially as it relates to ideas and things, into the classroom is through multimedia teaching. Art, video, music, and print are all examples of ways to include the external environment. When teaching care theory, I bring my dog Annie to class to exemplify learning to care by caring for animals and I bring plants (that I have grown from a large spider plant I keep for this purpose) for the students to pot and take home to serve as a metaphor for the work involved in caring for others so that others may grow and flourish. Bringing plants, animals, things (in the form of equipment, for example), ideas and other places (through video) to the classroom is entirely achievable in any discipline and will help open the horizons of the classroom while still contained within four walls which will potentially help students learn to value the objects in life and learn to relate them to differently.

When it comes to taking students to external environments, educators must consider what is being learned and the type of settings that would optimize learning, as

well as considering what kind of spaces are available. For an environmental ethics course, I took my students away from campus for a week, camping out together and holding class at an environmental center that was a hay bale structure run on solar power with composting toilets. What was so effective about conducting the course in this external environment was that while students were being asked to consider their connections to the natural environment, we were living in a natural environment and while they were being asked to consider alternative ways of living, they were in what I deemed to be a functional and aesthetically pleasing space that met the criteria of alternative. This is obviously an extreme example as most courses are not able to be conducted entirely off-campus, however, it demonstrates the idea of taking students elsewhere to learn. It is possible, instead, to change locations for part or all of a class. For reasons connected specifically to what I was teaching at the time, I have held class in all sorts of locales around the campus where I taught, such as the weight room, cafeteria, gymnasium, football field, green space outside of the building, next to the highway, at a high ropes course, at a climbing wall, in a boardroom, in a root cellar, chapel, on a theater stage, in a stairwell, at a pond, in the hockey arena, in the faculty lounge and so forth. Each of these locations became teaching partners with me, firstly, because the place was different which lends an air of excitement and anticipation, increasing the adventure of the learning, and, secondly, because the place helped communicate what was to be learned. The point of including environment, both the classroom environment and the external environment, as an aspect of the Classroom CARE model is that an educator may bolster the learning that is taking place by taking care of the atmosphere within the

classroom and connecting students to the world at large, and in doing so may foster educative encounters with the world.

### **Objection**

The clearest objection to what has been presented in the chapter is that it is too difficult to put into action the Classroom CARE model. There are, admittedly, enough demands currently placed on educators without asking that they evaluate and form a classroom according to the Classroom CARE model for the purposes of educative encounter. As an educator, it can feel overwhelming to be asked to do more. To counter, I suggest that while the Classroom CARE model should be used to assess where a classroom is at in regards to fostering educative encounters, the resulting change from the assessment should be approached with small steps in mind. A course does not need to be, nor is it possible for it to be, overhauled in a day. In my first year of teaching I made a common mistake that leads directly to burnout. I tried to make every class in every course the best it could possibly be. My supervisor asked me why I was working so hard. I almost snorted my indignation was so strong. How could I not work hard given all the demands on me? He asked again, why I was working so hard. I answered defensively that if I did not work as hard as I had been working, my classes would not be as good. His follow up question asked why my courses had to be as good as they were currently. I was dumbfounded. Was it not obvious that because I was an educator, I was responsible to provide my students with the best classes possible? He counseled me that while this was true, it was not necessary that I hit a home run every time when I was just learning to teach. His formula for both classroom success and educator sanity was that for the first time teaching a course, every third class

was a ‘home run’. The second time through a course two out of three classes were home runs. By the third time I taught a course it should be as great as I can possibly make it be. This advice applies to the type of changes I am suggesting in this chapter as well. It is not important, nor possible to tackle all elements of the Classroom CARE model at once, especially if it is drastically different from how an educator currently conducts class. Instead, so that it is change that can last and be made without burning out or overloading the instructor, it should be made in small increments. These increments could be a matter of incorporating one element of the model, such as community, in a course the first time around, followed by incorporating active and reflective practices the second time through and finally including environmental considerations by the third time around, at which point a course fully follows the Classroom CARE model. This addresses issues that are within the influence of an educator, leaving unanswered questions about that which is outside the influence of an educator.

Limits on extending one’s class out into the community, such as money, time and location; classroom size effecting time and ability to form community; and pressure to cover content that may be seen as more important than forming community or doing reflection are all issues that challenge the likelihood of the Classroom CARE model being implemented. There are confounding factors that do indeed set obstacles in front of implementing the Classroom CARE model. If it is outside the scope of an educator’s influence, then I urge educator’s doing the best they are able under the circumstances. There is a ‘best’ though that finds a way to shape education according to educative encounter. Money, time and location are real confounding factors, but there are solutions, such as partnering with an outside organization with access to money and staff to help

make connecting to the external environment possible. For instance, I worked for a Biosphere Reserve under a grant that provided funding for students to travel and me as educator for field trips at no cost to the schools. If a classroom is greater than 50 students, forming a community will be challenging, but forming micro-communities within the greater classroom will help towards fostering educative encounters. Content does not have to stand in opposition to process oriented aspects of learning such as community and reflection. A creative educator will find a way to achieve the demands of the course content and discipline in an educative encounter manner. This is not to say that overcoming every obstacle is merely a matter of the educator trying harder or being more creative. There are real obstacles that will halt aspects of this model from being realized. In these cases, the model may serve as a regulative ideal. However, there are often still choices available to an educator as to how his class will operate.

### **Conclusion**

Three things have been accomplished in this chapter. The first accomplishment is an assessment tool for educators to consider the extent to which their own classrooms may or may not be in accord with a classroom that fosters educative encounter according to how I have conceptualized it. Using CARE, educators ask themselves, or are asked: how their classroom is a community, connects with their students' own communities and invites the community at large into the classroom and takes the classroom into the community at large; whether their classroom is active in that students are engaged head, heart and hands; how reflection is incorporated; and, what the nature of the classroom environment is and whether connections are made to environments beyond the classroom walls. Secondly, this chapter addresses how the CARE model communicates goals or

aims for education, both in how it is conducted and in its intended outcomes. Education, according to the model,

should be undertaken through

community building, active

and reflective practices in a

welcoming environment and

result in students that have a

capacity for care, community

building, action and

reflection, and in their own

homes and places of work

able to create and/or contribute to environments suitable for learning and loving, as well

as connect the 'four wall' environment to that of the greater world. The third

accomplishment of this chapter is that the Classroom CARE model serves as a toolbox or

'how to' for educators, regarding how to foster classrooms where learning through

experience is valued, especially encounter as the relational aspect of experience so that

educative encounters may occur. Aspects of the model relate to the arenas of encounter,

aiding educators in enabling encounters to occur with others, self and the world. Though

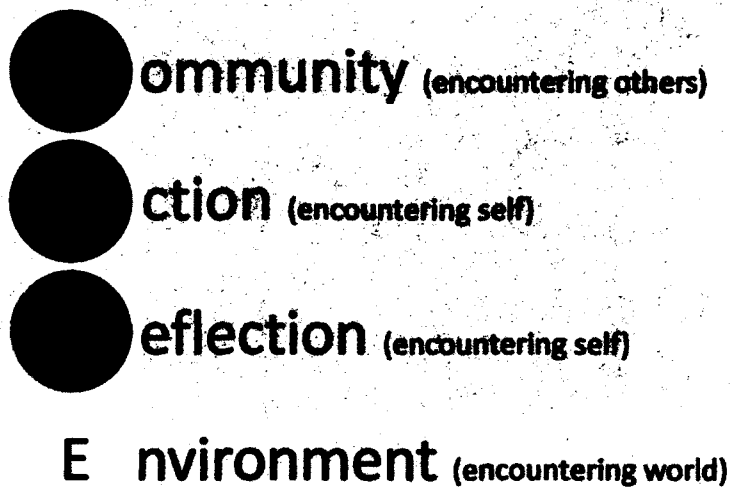
not a hard and fast rule, as each aspect of the model can lead to encounters in all arenas,

attending to community in the classroom promotes educative encounters with others,

attending to action and reflection in the classroom promotes educative encounters with

self, and attending to the environment in the classroom promotes educative encounters

with the world. The three accomplishments of this chapter, in terms of assessing, setting



goals and achieving a classroom made for educative encounters through the Classroom CARE model, bring together the work done in this dissertation of analyzing Dewey, Buber and Noddings as philosophers of encounter.



## CHAPTER VIII

### CODA

Having reached this point we might ask why this conception matters. Utilizing the questions *what, so what, and now what* as explicated in the Classroom CARE model, I explore the significance of understanding educative encounter, especially as an aim for higher education. In what follows I offer a summation of, and argument for, the novel conception of educative encounter put forth in this dissertation, its' possible utility, and potential next steps.

#### What? A Review

In this dissertation, I set out to provide a novel conception of educative encounter as a means of providing a pedagogical framework for directing experience in the classroom for the purpose of cultivating growth, and specifically cultivating care (N. Noddings, 2003a). By honing in on encounter as the relational aspect of experience, emphasizing the importance of the relational quality of the learning experience, and articulating a different approach to teaching in higher education, this conception helps educators attend to strengthening learning outcomes oriented towards the growth of students. All of this serves towards the illumination of learning through and for educative encounter by addressing both the meaning of educative encounter and what constitutes ideal ones.

To accomplish my purpose, I undertook an analysis of three philosophers, each selected for their relevancy to encounter in education. The analysis began, in Chapter Two, with John Dewey. Dewey's strongest contribution to my articulation of educative

encounter is his idea on subject-object knowing (McDermott, 1981). Dewey perceives the role of the learner as being active, stemming from a pragmatic approach to learning that is grounded in experience. In Dewey's view the learner has direct access to knowing through participation, necessary for educative encounters.

In Chapter Three, the work of Martin Buber was taken into consideration. Buber, with his concept of I-Thou encounter offers a foundation for Dewey's subject-object knowing (Buber, 1958b). Knowing, according to Buber, must begin with our relation to others as subjects for fulsome learning to occur. Buber also helps us recognize that there is more to any other we may meet than the experience we may have of this other.

Finally, in Chapter Four, the work of Nel Noddings was brought under analysis. Noddings, in her care theory, delineates a caring relationship in which both members of the relationship are aware of the care-giving and receiving. When caring, "each must decide how to meet the other and what to do with the moment" (Noddings, 2005, p. 24), a relationship which requires the one cared for to be responsive if care is received and for the one-caring to treat the other with attitudes and actions of care. Noddings' ethics of care places relation and the needs of the other centrally in any moral decision making, promoting actions that will build, maintain and support caring relations.

Following these analyses, I synthesized the work of these three philosophers, in Chapter Five, to build the conception of encounter. Encounter is that aspect of experience which takes place between one and the other, both between subject and object as well as between subject and subject. This place between refers to the relational component of experience. In the case of subject and subject, it is meeting and being met in unison; one person meeting another, with that other *acknowledging* that a meeting is transpiring. In a

schematic description of encounter, A meets B, in that A performs some act, namely, but not exclusively, initiating dialogue, in accordance with meeting, and B recognizes that meeting, and responds by participating in dialogic relation with A. Encounter is both active and passive, requiring the ones encountering to act towards, and to receive, the other.

Education that fosters educative encounters entails forming habits to help us meet and be met well. Educative encounter belongs to the realm of primary experience as it is part of firsthand or direct experience. If this is not so the meeting is based on someone else's relationship rather than the formation of one's own relationship with the subject or object. This does not mean that an encounter is unmediated, in part because of potential for continuity (McDermott, 1981) and in part because *even within a primary experience many influences are being exerted in meaning making*.

Certain conditions must be met for an educative encounter to occur:

10. **Proximity:** Familiarity is imperative to this notion of educative encounter in that it relates to subject-to-subject or subject-to-object meetings.
11. **Genuine Mutuality:** The meeting must take place in a spirit of genuine mutuality, which requires trust of the one being met that the other is really there for her, present in a consistent manner.
12. **Moderate Inclusiveness:** One must be able to understand one's own experience as well as that of the other as best as possible and recognize the other as having inherent value and identity, not just in connection to one's own value and identification.
13. **Humility:** One must not be full of herself lest one's ego obstructs reception.
14. **Love:** Working of the whole being towards relation must be anchored in love, defined in this case as responsibility for another in how we see them.
15. **Being Real:** Presenting an actual depiction of one's self rather than projecting an image of how one would like to be known is necessary so that the relation is not limited to a superficial level.
16. **Separation:** One must be able to see one's self as separate, or distant, from others while in relation with others.

17. **Mutual Action:** Joining with another to share your self and welcome the other, making meaning for both you and the other.
18. **Confirmation:** Acknowledging the best in the other.

In Chapter Six I considered how a person experiences the three core arenas, in which encounter is manifested (self, others and the world). For the purpose of educative encounter as articulated in this dissertation, the other can be conceived in terms of self as other; separate persons as other, such as family, partner, friend, neighbor, and stranger; and the world as other, including places, plants, animals, ideas and things. Once each arena was defined to explain the types of relations that occur in each sphere of encounter, an effort was made to understand how one learns to encounter the other and learns from encountering the other in these various arenas.

This effort focused on dispositions and actions conducive to promoting educative encounters. When it comes to learning to encounter, these dispositions and actions include: discord; internal dialogue; experiencing one's self; owning facets of self; appreciating the whole; working in the present and in the particular; engaging the other with one's whole being; being open and engaging with the other; stepping outside of well-rehearsed roles; recognizing there is much we do not know about the other; being curious about the other; interrupting usual patterns of living; overcoming embarrassment; ignoring social norms that prevent meeting; making eye contact; being awake and present; consideration of intrinsic value; attentiveness; readiness for the unexpected; lack of unreasonable fear; sense of wonder; valuing the objects in life; achievement; interaction and listening; and finally, critical thinking. Actions and dispositions that aid in learning from encounters are: awareness and acceptance of all the various selves that constitutes a self; understanding, appreciation and co-operation amongst the selves;

growing in the sense of expanding who we are, what we know, how we think, and what we feel; eyes that see (perceive) and ears that hear (listen); recognition; and having both journey and destination. These actions and dispositions help us consider how to promote encounters with self, others and the world through the higher education classroom so that we can become competent in our relations and learn from them.

In Chapter Seven I articulated the Classroom CARE model, which I have developed for the purposes of fostering the implementation of educative encounter in higher education. An educator that attends to the Classroom CARE model focuses on four pedagogically interrelated strands: community, action, reflection and environment, each of which is grounded in an ethics of care. By focusing on the four aspects of CARE, an educator has the potential to enhance the educative encounters of her students, even towards their ideal realization, both within her classroom, and in their lives beyond the institution. The gift of the educative encounter, when effectively realized, endures both while they are actively students in the classroom, and beyond graduation.

In attending to *community*, educators must take responsibility for building community in their own classrooms; connecting with their students' communities and building bridges to the community within which the school is located. An *action* oriented classroom is one that relies equally on intellectual, emotional and physical modes of learning where students are engaged in a participatory manner. *Reflection*, as part of this classroom, means integrating encounter as the relational aspect of experience with deliberate consideration for what has taken place or is taking place, what the meaning of this is and how it influences what is ahead. *Environment* refers to both the internal environment of the classroom, constructed so as to be a welcoming space within which

community, action and reflection may easily take place, and to the external environment within which the classroom is located.

The Classroom CARE model functions on multiple pedagogical levels. It serves as an assessment tool aiding educators in considering whether their classroom operates according to CARE; as an implementation tool with suggestions as to how to operate according to CARE; and as a communication of aims for education *as it happens*, ensuring it be caring, community building, active, reflective and welcoming, and that graduates, when they leave the classroom and school, are able to participate in and build community, act and reflect for growth and participate in and build welcoming environments, as well as be able to connect with other environments.

### **So What? Meaningfulness of Educative Encounter**

The focus of this dissertation is on educators and their students. Through this focus, educators are invited to recognize their responsibility for what occurs in the classroom and to approach this responsibility thoughtfully. Whether it is by inclusion or exclusion, students are taught what matters in regards to the values of a society. Educative encounter promotes moral education by teaching for and through relationships; it regards how we meet one another well and how we learn from this meeting. What follows is identification of certain trends and issues in higher education to which this conception of educative encounter has potential to contribute.

Currently, the fundamental goal of education seems to have been reduced to subject matter mastery, but there is no reason there might not be multiple goals for education. The goals of education should include both mastery of subject matter and the growth of one's person to becoming competent, caring, loving and lovable (Noddings,

2005). Subject matter mastery matters. When I go to the doctor with a health concern, I hope she has mastered her subject matter. The problem is when subject matter mastery is the foremost or only goal of education. As discussed in the analysis of Buber, it is not that we should not know the world in an I-It matter, but that I-Thou should be the foundation for I-It knowing. In terms of educative encounter, this means that helping students meet themselves, others and the world, including subject matter, in an educative encounter oriented manner should be a top priority and a place to begin. Encounter is not secondary, not an add-on, not a 'nice to have if we've got the time' kind of thing. Encounter is foundational to education. I-It knowing is not only insufficient without I-Thou knowing, it is deficient. We are not, cannot be, our best selves when our only education is I-It. To be our best selves, we require, fundamentally, the I-Thou.

This conception is not discipline specific; attending to the quality of encounters in a classroom may be done in any class, in any discipline. The conception of educative encounter is not about learning a specific thing, but rather about how learning happens. This approach to education does not supersede disciplinary knowledge; it enhances it through both the suggested pedagogical methods and by encouraging learning in both subjective and objective ways. Regardless of what is taught, if little to no attention is given to how it is taught, I suggest that the effect will be negligible. Educative encounter is a process oriented approach that spans across specific curricula. The way of knowing is as important, if not more important, than the 'what' of knowing. The research questions for this dissertation regarded understanding educative encounters and what constitutes ideal ones. With this knowledge, conditions, dispositions and actions were communicated to create a process, encapsulated through the Classroom CARE model that alters the

process of education rather than the content of education. For this reason, the work of this dissertation most strongly helps emphasize the importance of process. Content does not convey a sense of being received, cared for or of trustworthiness, all important to foster educative encounter. How a teacher goes about meeting her students and teaching the content she is meant to teach will help shape what lasts in education long after a particular equation, for instance, is forgotten.

There is a place for this dissertation in the world of research in a couple of ways. In the realm of philosophy of education, this dissertation may serve as a piece of the conversation regarding the role of educative encounter in strengthening teaching in higher education. The completion of this project occurs in the same year that Jane Roland Martin (2011) has published a book titled *Education Reconfigured: Culture, Encounter and Change*. Her work is encouraging in that there is current need and interest in asking what encounter is and what it has to do with learning. In this most recent book of hers, she states that “whenever education occurs an individual has some sort of encounter, and that in this encounter the individual changes” (J. R. Martin, 2011, p. 1). I agree, and have worked to provide understanding of how education can be a particular type of encounter; an educative encounter founded in care, based on relationship that promotes growth in both disciplinary study and in capacity for care. Her theory encompasses all learning, that which occurs in school and outside of schooling. What I add to the conversation she has begun is a focus on higher education.

My dissertation also contributes to ongoing philosophy of education scholarship on Dewey and Noddings, two of the most popular scholars with the greatest influence in this field, and brings Buber into the conversation. One of the ways my concept extends



both of their work is in applying it to the realm of higher education, where their reception has not been as welcomed as it has been in elementary schools. By building my concept on Noddings, Dewey and Buber, I am taking their work into a context where it's not always appreciated. Doing so helps higher education to be offered in a more comprehensive holistic way. Dewey is often seen as a hands-on, community oriented educator whose ideas pertain more to elementary school, and perhaps some secondary school, education. Noddings, with her focus on care, resonates with elementary teachers. Buber is so esoteric that few have considered how to 'do' Buber in higher education. If I was to survey professors asking for a list of what they are meant to do in the teaching aspect of their jobs, caring for their students and creating community would likely not rank very high on the list if listed at all. Instead, items such as rigorously pushing forward content and producing knowledge are likely to be listed. However, rigorously pushing forward content is more than powerpoint presentations and difficult tests. Educative encounters strengthen learning. Community and a welcoming environment form the basis for action and reflection to occur. When done well, the Classroom CARE model develops the whole person and not only supports but enhances rigorous disciplinary learning because it starts with encounter between student and other leading out to other ways of knowing that, when based on educative encounter, become lasting and transformational.

Understanding the conception of educative encounters and fostering ideal ones in higher education through the implementation of the Classroom CARE model is meaningful in a myriad of ways. First, it includes moral education by focusing on how we meet each other in a manner to promote growth. Second, by going beyond subject mastery, this conception broadens the goals of higher education to include growth of

one's person. Third, this conception has applicability in all disciplines. The fourth way this concept is meaningful is that it adds to the philosophical conversation on the importance of encounter for education. Finally, this novel conception also takes Dewey, Noddings and Buber into higher education, an area each philosopher has had less uptake than in elementary or secondary education. These five reasons all contribute to the meaningfulness of the work of this dissertation.

### **An Incomplete Theory of Education**

As mentioned in Chapter Six, I come to this topic from the perspective of a meliorist. My readiness to engage in hoping for education by offering a conception of encounter is grounded in recognition of the reality and potential of problems in the world. I believe we must use what we have to make a better world. Like pragmatists, my hope for education does not spring from an attitude of eternal optimism, not hoping in spite of, but rather in recognition of the challenges and limits of education (Fishman & McCarthy, 2007). Meliorism is “the idea that at least there is a sufficient basis of goodness in life and its conditions so that by thought and earnest effort we may constantly make better things” (Dewey in Shade, 2001, p. 17). This perspective pertains to this dissertation in that I am offering critique and contribution to one piece of the enormous puzzle that is higher education. This piece regards teachers and students and the learning and connections that transpire from relationships formed in the classroom.

What I do not address or what remains incomplete is a consideration of the substance of education. I have pointed out that an advantage of this conception is that it is not discipline specific and may be done in any course in any classroom. While this may be true, it provides no comment on whether every discipline and every classroom should

carry on as parts of higher education. I also do not address systematic issues, such as class size and structure. These issues of the workings of educational institutions and “the architecture within which education occurs” (D. Orr, 1994, p. 33) clearly have bearing on how well encounter in the higher education classroom may be operationalized, but are outside the scope of this research.

### **Now What? Looking Ahead**

Education reconfigured on the basis of the novel conception of educative encounter will change both the practice and research of the classroom and its pedagogies in higher education. In the following section I identify some important ways that educative encounter may influence higher education.

#### **Practice**

Texas Governor Rick Perry has asked Legislature to work towards providing bachelor degrees for under \$10,000 in colleges and universities across Texas (Hacker, 2011). In response, Cary Israel, president of the Collin County Community College District said, “I don’t want affordability to trump rigorous standards and high expectations” (in Hacker, 2011, p. n.p.). The effort to make higher education more affordable is confounded by increase in demand and decrease in funds (Lkhamsuren, Dromina-Voloc, & Kimmie, 2009). Some worry that the aim will be to “improve higher education by starving it” (Orkodashvili, 2009, p. 5). One of the main concerns related to making education more economically feasible, for students and the institutions themselves, regard the necessary sacrifices to do so. For instance, as cuts increase, so do teacher-student ratios it seems. One of the main purposes of educative encounter is to offer quality education through encounters; quality referring to both force (the effect of

learning on the present) and function (where the learning leads) (McDermott, 1981). While this novel conception of educative encounter does not help cut costs in higher education or make it more accessible, it does help provide direction for maintaining quality education in the face of economic challenges. When quality is maintained or strengthened, students are likely to perceive that their education is worthwhile. Though some of the ideas I have suggested for implementing the Classroom CARE model cost more than an average university course, by doing such things as taking students off campus, it is not necessary for more money to be spent to implement education that fosters educative encounters.

Related to the affordability of education are the outcomes of education that, recently in the news, pits the issue of employability and jobs available for college graduates against a mountain of student debt created in obtaining undergrad degrees. “Median debt levels amongst students who graduated from four-year institutions were \$15,500 for publics and \$19,400 for private” (Orkodashvili, 2009, p. 3). Wall Street Occupiers are pledging to refuse to pay back their student loans if one million will pledge to do so (Soave, 2011). Part of the reasoning behind the idea is that the loans were taken out under the assumption of employment upon graduation, an assumption perpetuated by colleges and universities. The current job market is weak, resulting in unemployed college graduates, saddled with debt they are unable to repay. The question may be raised as to what a student is purchasing when they purchase education. A brighter future and a good job would likely be the answer of many. This results in pressure for colleges to be job producers even though universities were instead founded to be knowledge producers and conveyers, though the two are not mutually exclusive. Education in accordance with

educative encounters offers value beyond employment readiness while preparing students to enter the workforce upon graduation. The value beyond employment readiness lay in the preparation for encountering others in the realm of home and life outside of work, and especially in strengthening the ability to encounter self. The value for employment readiness is the ability to engage in the relationships of work. When a student is aided in growth and competency as well as developing as a caring, loving and lovable person (N. Noddings, 2003a), she is prepared in many dimensions for a brighter future and a good job. I have been hired as an instructor for a Workplace Essential Skills course with the explicit purpose of pre-employability training. This ten week course is being held at a uranium mine, by the mine, to prepare workers for the mine. This course includes first aid training, a course in waste water management and three hours a day doing math upgrading, all of which can be taught according to the Classroom CARE model while being directed at increasing the students' competencies. The course also includes a tremendous amount of hours dedicated to building students' ability to encounter themselves, others and the world, honing their understanding of themselves, considering how they may care for themselves and others through work and at work. An explicit employability purpose does not exclude entertaining philosophical questions meant to promote dialogue nor learning to build community through action and reflection in a welcoming environment. How much more, then, is fostering educative encounters in a university setting possible, given that there are purposes beyond job training for such settings?

Online learning is becoming more pervasive as colleges and universities continue to develop or add online learning options. One in four students have taken an online

course, with predictions that most students will take an online course in the next 10 years (Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011). The prevailing perception of online learning, however, is that the educational value of such courses is not as strong as that of courses taken in the classroom (Parker et al., 2011). Concerns of isolation in learning and reduced interaction with an educator and with classmates are part of the concern that these courses are less educationally valuable. While the Classroom CARE model was developed with an on-campus college course in mind, there is nothing in the model that excludes it from influencing how remote and online courses may be offered. In fact, the Classroom CARE model should be used to address concerns about the educational value of such courses. Community may be built online. Technologies, such as Skype, help support community development. Class sessions and assignments should still be active and reflective and effort should be made to create a welcoming online space for learners to interact.

### **Research**

The novel conception of educative encounter has potential to influence the type of research conducted in higher education and how it is conducted. Considering methodologies that take relationships (and relational development) into account will uphold the conception of educative encounter. A reciprocal relationship between the research and those being researched would be expected, one based in dialogue. Taking the notion of educative encounter seriously requires an approach to research that allows for an expanded notion of the typical individual as the unit of analysis. It then becomes critical to use sociocultural methodologies to look at a system of individuals (e.g., Rogoff, 2003), ones that do not separate individuals from their context and that allows for the empirical exploration of the reciprocal nature of relationships.

This dissertation lays out a strong and clearly articulated conceptual foundation for the concept of educative encounter that could be evaluated by empirical research. One potential study would be a design-based approach, where researchers first develop a course based on the premises of educative encounter and then set out to investigate the results. Although not a causal study, this type of research would allow for a qualitative understanding of what higher education might look like if designed from the outset with educative encounter in mind. Another study could research the effect of educative encounters on learning and student and professor perception/satisfaction in higher education. This could occur through variation in nature and quality of educative encounters as fostered through the conditions, dispositions and actions identified in this dissertation. This would be accomplished by comparing receptive modes of experience/encounter as teaching techniques with analytical and productive modes in their potential to influence student learning and satisfaction, as well as professor satisfaction. Questions to be asked about such a conception of educative encounter being lived out as pedagogy in higher education include considering whether higher modalities of experience, such as those associated with educative encounter, in the classroom correspond with greater advances in learning in subject areas, higher levels of student satisfaction with the professor and course for students, and higher levels of satisfaction for the professors. There is much more to doing such a study than suggested here, but it gives an idea of the type of qualitative and quantitative research that this dissertation might generate.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conclusion**

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<sup>5</sup> Pieces of this section on 'now what' for research first appear in Burke, J., Nolan, C. & A. Rheingold. *Nel Noddings' Care Theory and Outdoor Education: Bringing Relations to the Center*. (in process).

My hope for this work is that it would serve as an encouraging guide to educators inquiring about ways of reconfiguring teaching in higher education. This dissertation also functions as a solid foundation for my interest in working to strengthen teaching in universities and colleges, whether through a Teaching and Learning Center or through a leadership position in an education department further down the road. In the Classroom CARE Model I see great potential for both workshops and professional development for educators. The work of this dissertation has served to strengthen the philosophical underpinnings of my own educational practice in a manner that enables me to communicate to other educators what it is that I do and why I do it. It is apparent that the novel conception of educative encounters and the process of implementing ideal ones through the Classroom CARE model combine to offer educators promising developments in pedagogy for the purposes of directing experience to the needs of each student for growth and specifically cultivating the ability of the individual to care.



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<sup>i</sup> This section on hope first appeared in Nolan, C., & Stitzlein, S. M. (2011). Meaningful hope for educators in times of high anxiety and low morale. *Democracy and Education*, 19(1), 10.

<sup>ii</sup> *Rock, Paper, Scissors* is a game for two players typically played using the players' hands. The two players each make a fist with one hand and hold the other open, palm upward. Together, they tap their fists in their open palms once, twice, and on the third time form one of three items: a rock (by keeping the hand in a fist), a sheet of paper (by holding the hand flat, palm down), or a pair of scissors (by extending the first two fingers and holding them apart). The winner of that round depends on the items formed. If the same item is formed, it's a tie. If a rock and scissors are formed, the rock wins, because a rock can smash scissors. If scissors and paper are formed, the scissors win, because scissors can cut paper. If paper and a rock are formed, the paper wins, because a sheet of paper can cover a rock. After one round is completed, another is begun (quoted from <http://www.rinkworks.com/games/rps.shtml>).